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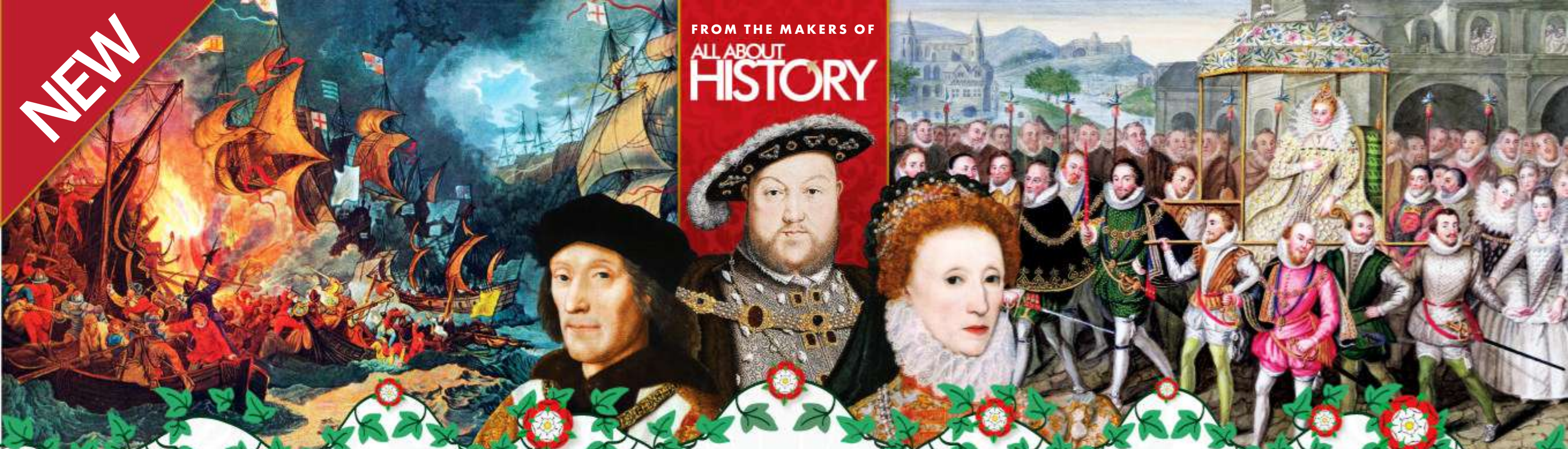
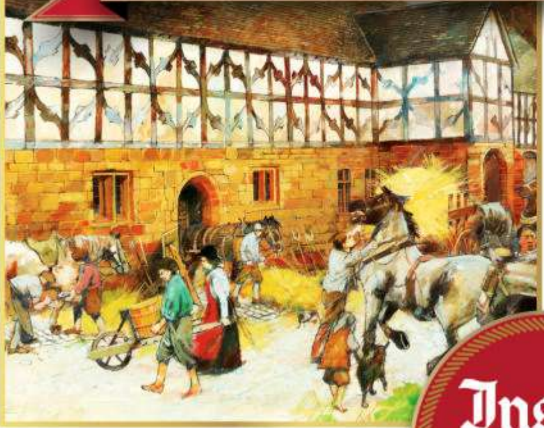


Book of
TUDOR ENGLAND

STEP BACK IN TIME AND EXPLORE ONE OF HISTORY'S MOST FASCINATING PERIODS



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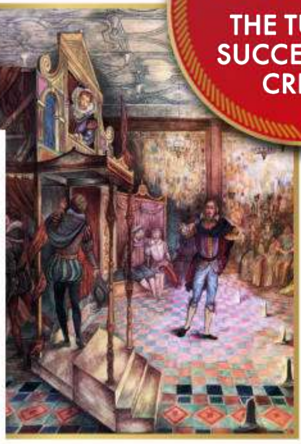
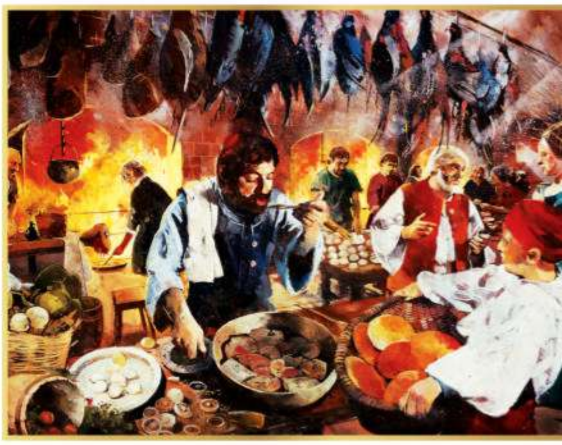
THE TUDOR SUCCESSION CRISIS





Digital Edition

FUTURE

FIRST EDITION

SOCIETY • REBELLION • CULTURE • REFORMATION

Book of
TUDOR ENGLAND

The Tudor period is one of the most fascinating periods in English history, marked by the rise of a dynasty that would leave an indelible mark on the nation. This era witnessed huge changes – from religious upheavals that shaped the lives of Tudor people to cultural advancements that ignited the English Renaissance. It's no wonder that over 500 years later, the Tudor period still captures our imaginations. Embark on a journey back in time with our new bookazine and immerse yourself in the vibrant world of Tudor England. Explore the daily lives of ordinary people, unravel the intrigue and splendour of the Tudor court, and meet iconic figures like Thomas Cromwell and Elizabeth I. Whether you are a history buff or a curious reader, this bookazine offers an in-depth look at the era's most captivating aspects.

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BOOK OF TUDOR ENGLAND

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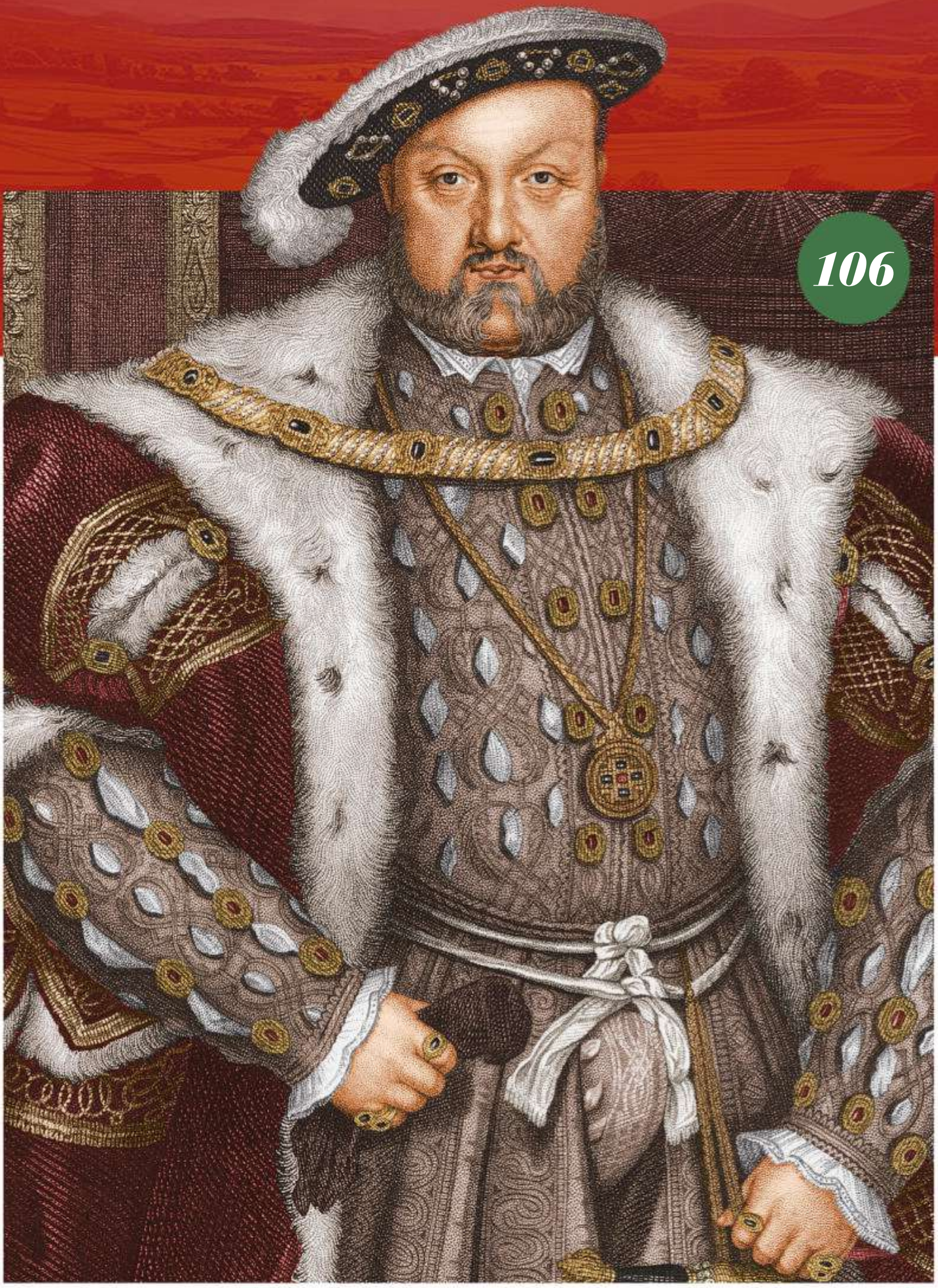
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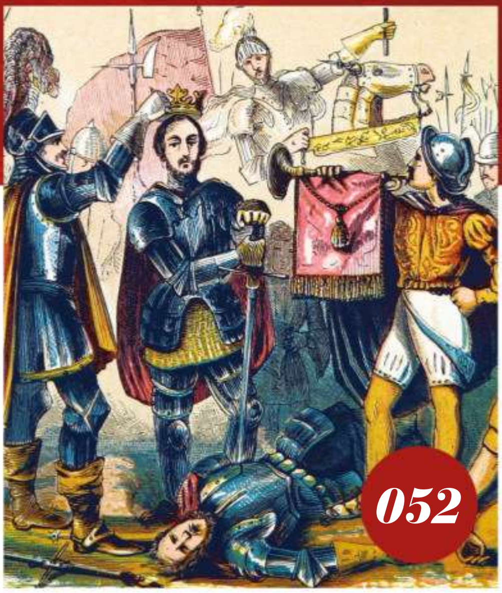
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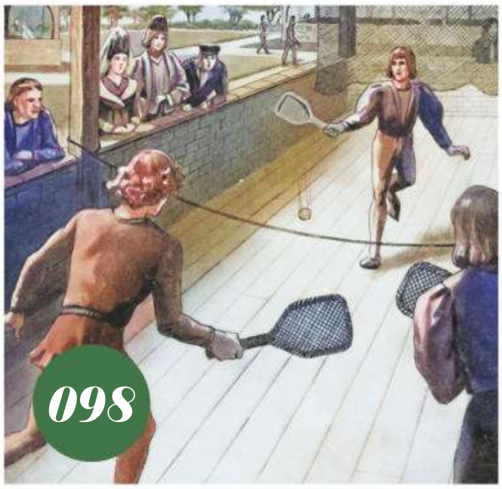
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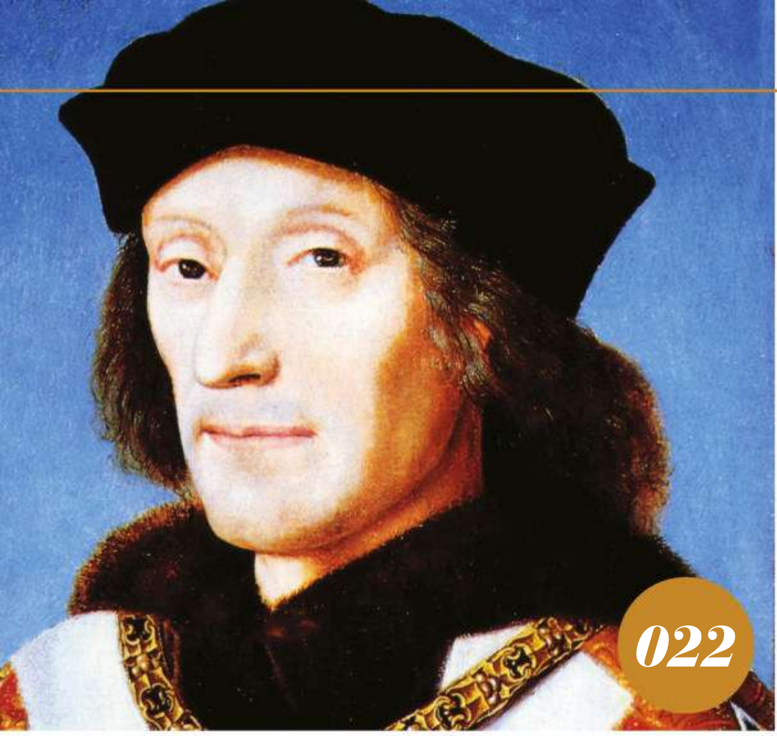
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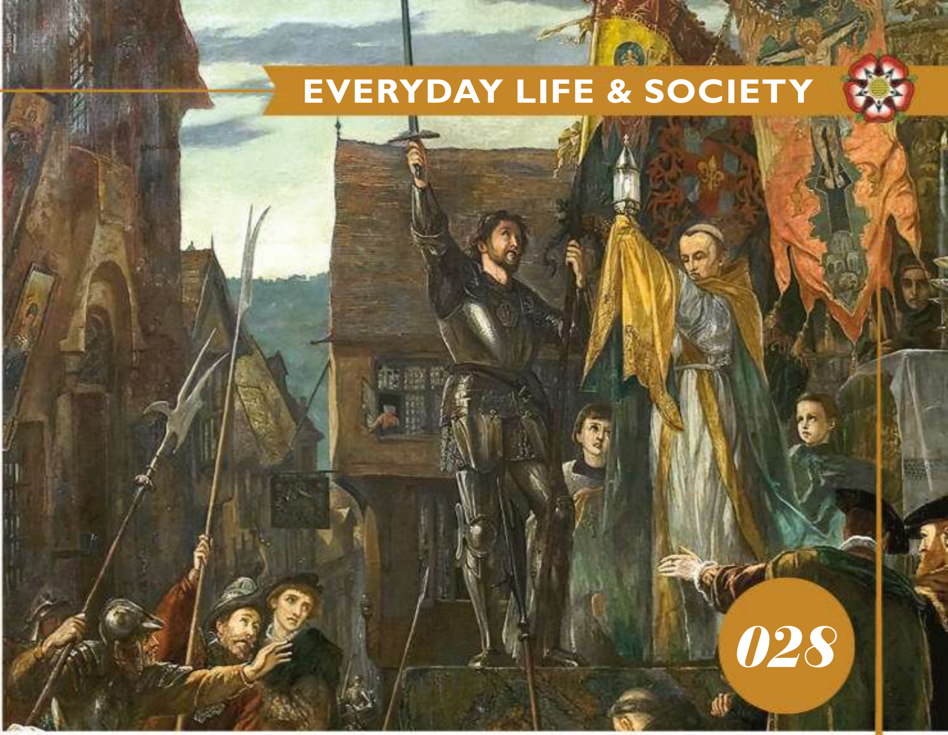
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EVERYDAY LIFE IN TUDOR ENGLAND

The Tudor period was a time of incredible growth and economic expansion for England, with every citizen contributing to its success

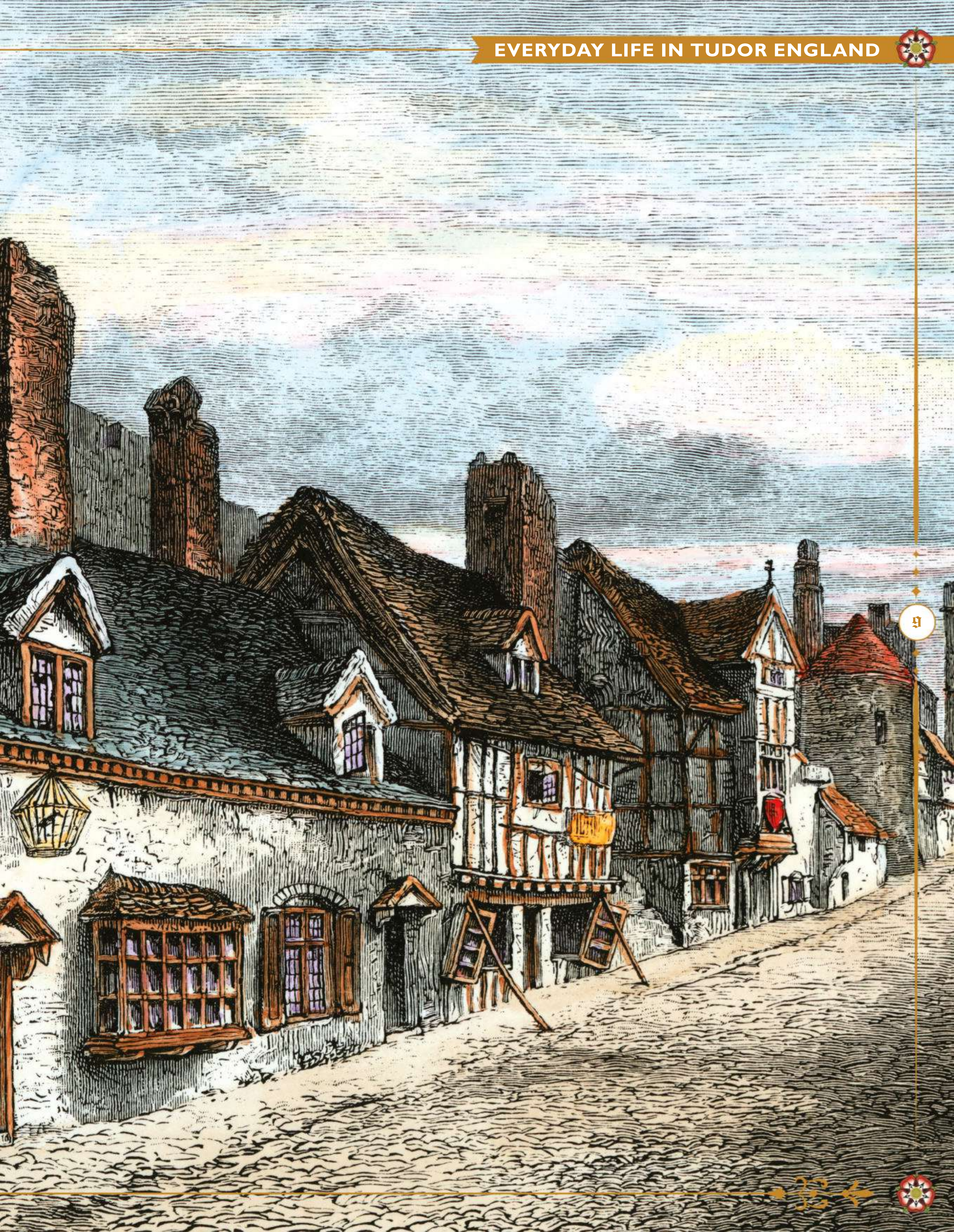
The popular image of Tudor life paints a picture of kings, queens and nobles engaged in courtly intrigue and living lives of magnificent excess, but the truth is that urban existence was very much a minority way of life, with 90 per cent of the population living and working in rural areas. For every ornately dressed noble, dashing explorer and majestic monarch, there were countless commoners providing the food for their tables, the textiles for their clothes and the trade goods on which their fortunes, dynasties and empires were built. Despite the huge contrasts in their everyday lifestyles, the rural and urban communities were entirely dependent on each other for their continued existence.

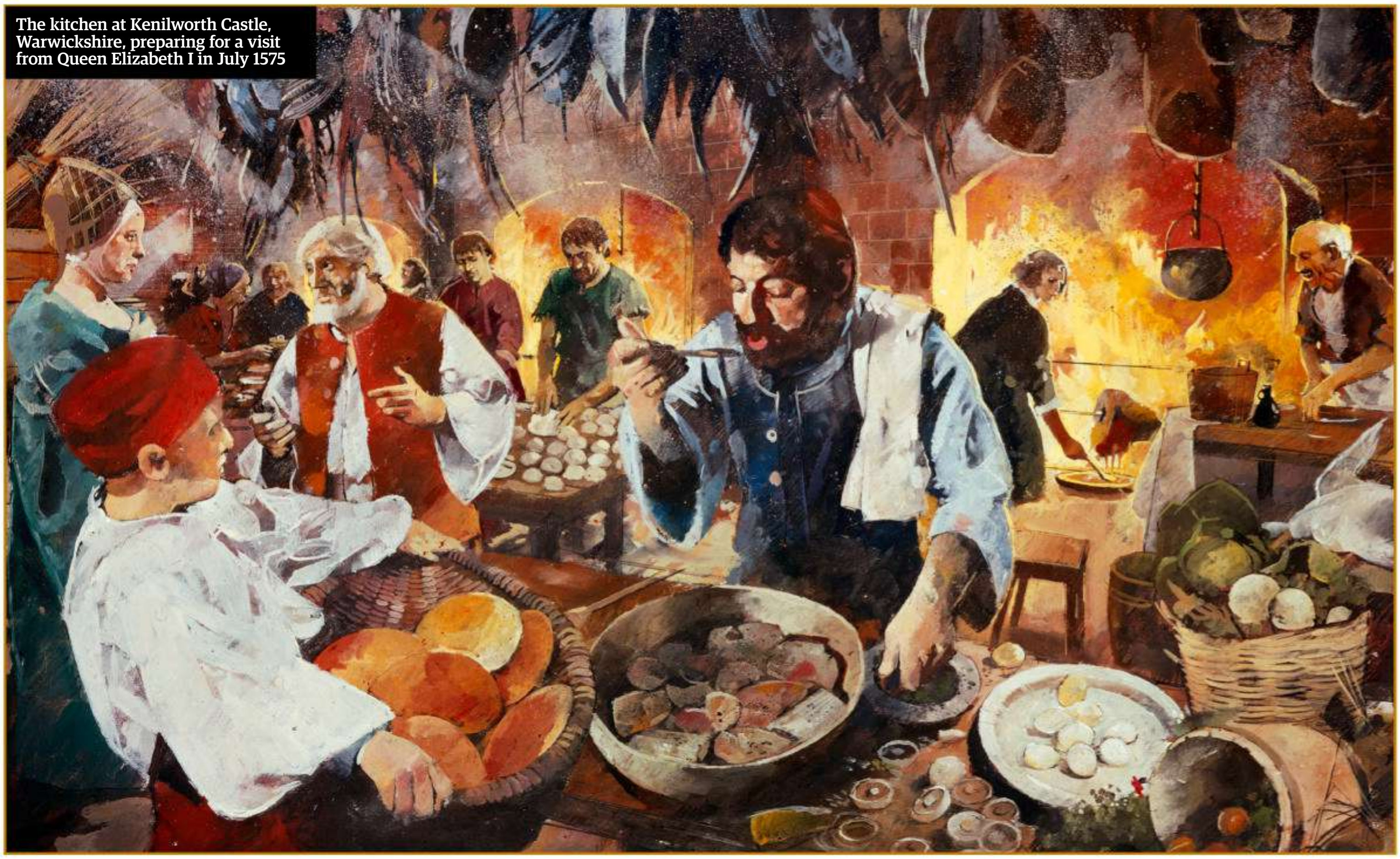
The poorest rural folk lived in one- or two-room huts, dirt-floored and built from cob (a mixture of mud, straw and lime), with a shuttered or curtained window to allow some light to enter. For the wealthier peasant, homes took the form of 'crook' houses, built around simple timber frames with wattle and daub walls between the timber sections. Furnishings were minimal and functional: a table and stool, an open fire in the centre of the main living area with a hole in the roof allowing smoke to escape, beds that consisted of little more than straw-filled mattresses and a woollen blanket. In addition, the living space might well be shared with any animals a family kept, bringing extra warmth to the house, but also less welcome associated smells.

Much like today, the heart of any home was the kitchen and food was, of course, a crucial part of everyday life. Cooking their meals in an earthenware pot over a fire, ordinary people would usually eat meals consisting of a little cheese, bread (made from wheat and rye) and a type of stew known as pottage. Pottage was made using grains, home-grown vegetables such as cabbage, leeks and celery - potatoes did not arrive in England until the late 16th century - and herbs from the garden. Meat could be added but fresh meat was a luxury, and peasants would add scrap meat or fish bones to their pottage if they had them. For ordinary families who could afford it, they would eat preserved meat that was salted or smoked.

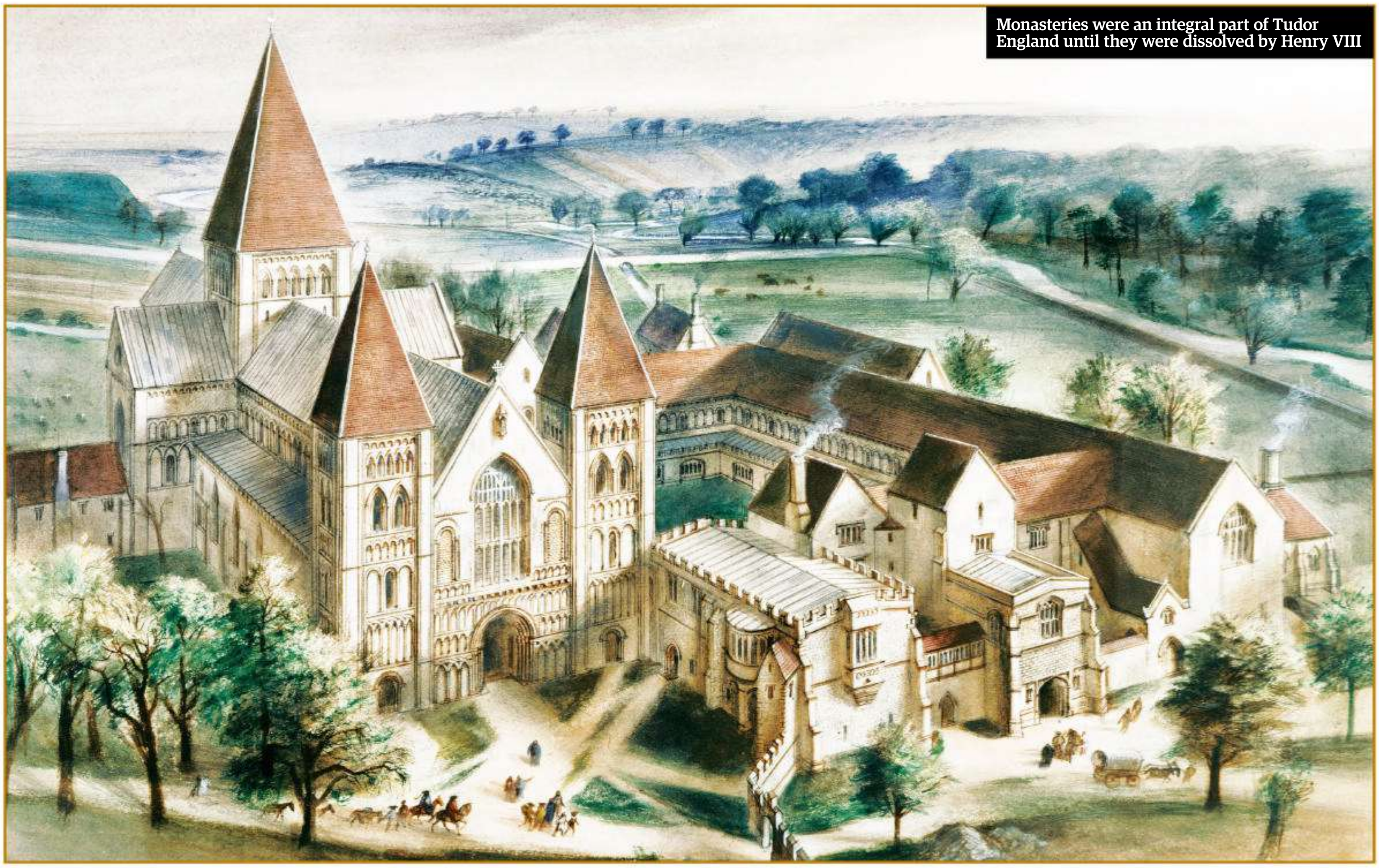
In contrast, the Tudor nobility did not struggle to fill their tables with sumptuous food. Food was a great signifier of wealth and status during this period and the more on your table, the richer you were. The diet of the upper classes consisted of meat, spices, bread, wine and more. They also ate pottage, but their version would also include ingredients such as ginger and wine. However, no matter what social class they were in, everyone in Tudor England would drink ale.

As for the monarchs themselves, Henry VIII famously had a love for food. He ate high quantities of meat such as venison, beef and lamb, as well as game pies, pottages and a variety of sweet desserts. Meanwhile his daughter, Elizabeth I, was known for her sweet tooth and a love for candied violets, which eventually caused her teeth to rot.

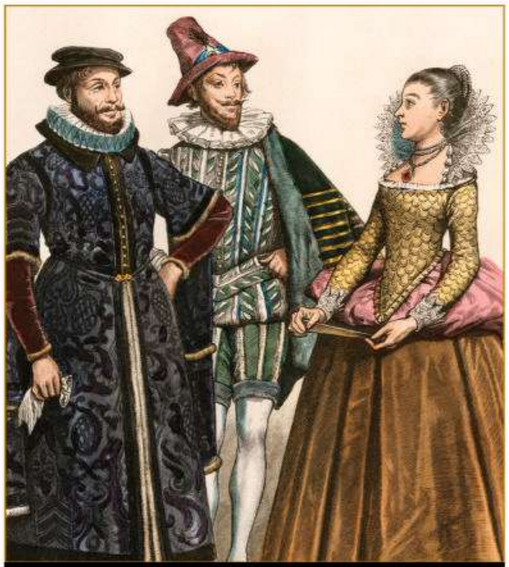




The kitchen at Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, preparing for a visit from Queen Elizabeth I in July 1575



Monasteries were an integral part of Tudor England until they were dissolved by Henry VIII



An English merchant, noble and lady-in-waiting wearing the typically ostentatious fashions of the wealthy

Monasteries held a prominent role in the early-Tudor period; much of the land was owned by local monasteries and priories, and was leased to the peasants to live on and work. Schooling was available to those who could afford to attend priory classrooms, and with many of the country's waterways owned by the church, use of a watermill to grind grain and 'full' (or cleanse) cloth meant paying the local monastery for the service. The church's coffers benefited at every level of society and very little of a peasant's daily life was not impacted in some way by the local monastery. When Henry VIII broke with the Catholic church in 1536 and dissolved the monasteries, the land and resources they owned were redistributed to nobles who took over the local administration, reaping the benefits previously enjoyed by the church. While the funds generated moved from the church to the crown, from the peasant's point of view little had changed: land still had to be rented and dues still had to be paid.

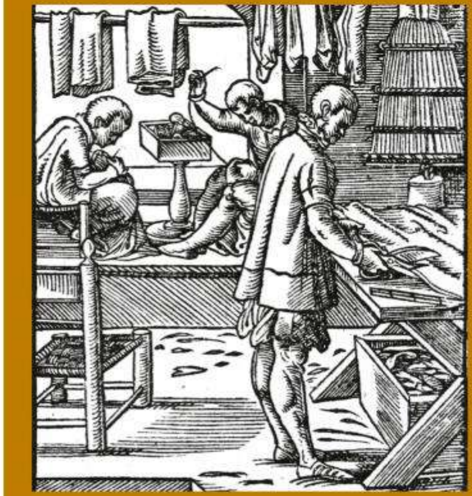
The backbone of the Tudor economy was agriculture. Farmable land was valuable, and landowners could increase the rent on peasants' homes to the point where the inhabitants could not afford to pay, forcing them to move away and releasing their land back to the landowner who could then turn it into more farmland. With every penny counting, wastage was kept to a minimum, with every possible source of supplementary income exploited. Livestock were bred to serve multiple purposes, with sheep providing milk, cheese and meat as well as wool; food scraps fed pigs; animal hide was turned into leather and vellum; and horn was used in the production of hornbooks for schools. Even animal fat could be boiled down and soaked into reeds to create rushlights, providing an economical, if foul-smelling, source of light on dark evenings.

Growth of the cloth trade during the early 1500s prompted many farmers to switch from

Tudor professions

LIFE WAS DIFFERENT IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS, BUT WHAT WERE THE CAREER PROSPECTS LIKE?

Town



Woad dyer

The primary source of blue dye for textiles was a plant brought to Britain by the Celts: woad. A particularly unpleasant job, extracting the dye required fermentation in vats of urine, producing noxious fumes that forced woad dyers to live and work on the edges of towns.

Gong scourer

Gong scourers were employed to remove the human waste from a town's privies, public latrines and cesspits. Working only at night, and often in cramped, highly noxious environments, the scourers would remove the accumulated waste and take it to designated dumps, or to be spread as fertiliser on fields.

Executioner

In an era where treason and religious dissent were rife and carried the most serious of penalties, the role of the executioner was an unfortunate necessity. The job was often well paid, but also brought with it a degree of fear, distrust and social exclusion.

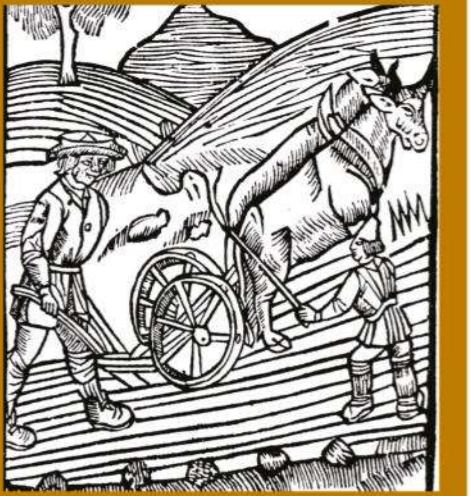
Merchant

With goods flowing through the towns, opportunities to profit from importing and exporting were frequent, and the rewards for establishing successful trade partnerships were immense. While wool was the most prominent export, money was also to be made from importing spices, coffee, tea and exotic foods.

Mayor

As the elected governmental representative of a town, the mayor's responsibilities were wide-ranging, from performing civic and social duties and overseeing the town's administration, to enforcing parliamentary statutes and acting as local magistrate to ensure that order was maintained within the areas of their jurisdiction.

Country



Leech collector

The popular use of leeches in medicine meant money could be made by anyone able to procure leeches for the medical professions. Leech collectors, often women, waded into marshes and ponds, using their bare skin to lure the leeches, putting themselves at significant risk of injury.

Farmer

The importance of the humble farmer to Tudor society can not be overstated – the export of cloth relied on the rearing of sheep, and without the constant supplies of grain, meat and vegetables they provided, towns and cities would have had to rely on more expensive imported food supplies to feed the masses.

Bailiff

Bailiffs were employed by the church, county sheriffs and private landowners, to collect taxes and fines, assemble trial juries and execute official orders such as foreclosure and eviction notices. Many would supplement their official wage by accepting bribes and gifts.

Fuller

Fullers took spun woollen material and, by soaking in stale urine and pounding for hours beneath heavy stones at the local mill, turned them into softer, warmer and much more desirable woollen cloth. The work was dirty, noisy and unpleasant, but the quality and value of the fulled cloth was greatly increased.

Noble landowner

In many ways enjoying a privilege more than a profession, the noble landowner was nevertheless a prominent figure in rural life. With their income drawn from the rent and taxes collected from the local peasants, the landowners were able to live very comfortably, enjoying pastimes such as hunting, tennis and lawn bowls.

Tudor farm: dawn to dusk

03:00-05:00
An early start

Restricted by the amount of daylight, work on the farm began before dawn with feeding and watering the livestock, and lighting the day's fire in the farmhouse. Breakfast for the farmer was often pottage, a thick vegetable stew.

06:00
Testing the boundaries

Branches from hazel coppices were woven together to form wattle fences, used as enclosures for livestock. Proper fencing was essential to prevent wild animals from attacking livestock.

07:00
Tending the flock

The farmer's most valuable asset, his sheep, required constant care and attention. The flock had to be fed, milked daily, moved from pasture to pasture and, when the time came, shorn of their wool or butchered for meat.

11:00
Feeding the work force

The day's main meal was eaten before noon and consisted principally of bread, vegetables and ale. With well water unsuitable for human consumption, ale was much safer to drink, as its alcohol content killed off most bacteria.

12:00
Preparing the harvest

As well as keeping livestock, farmers also grew arable crops like barley and peas. Cattle and oxen, rather than horses, were traditionally used to plough and harrow the fields ready for sowing, a long and labour-intensive process.

20:00
Labour's end

According to the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers, labourers worked until 7 or 8pm in spring and summer, making the most of the daylight. Workers would retire to their homes for the night before starting again at sunrise.

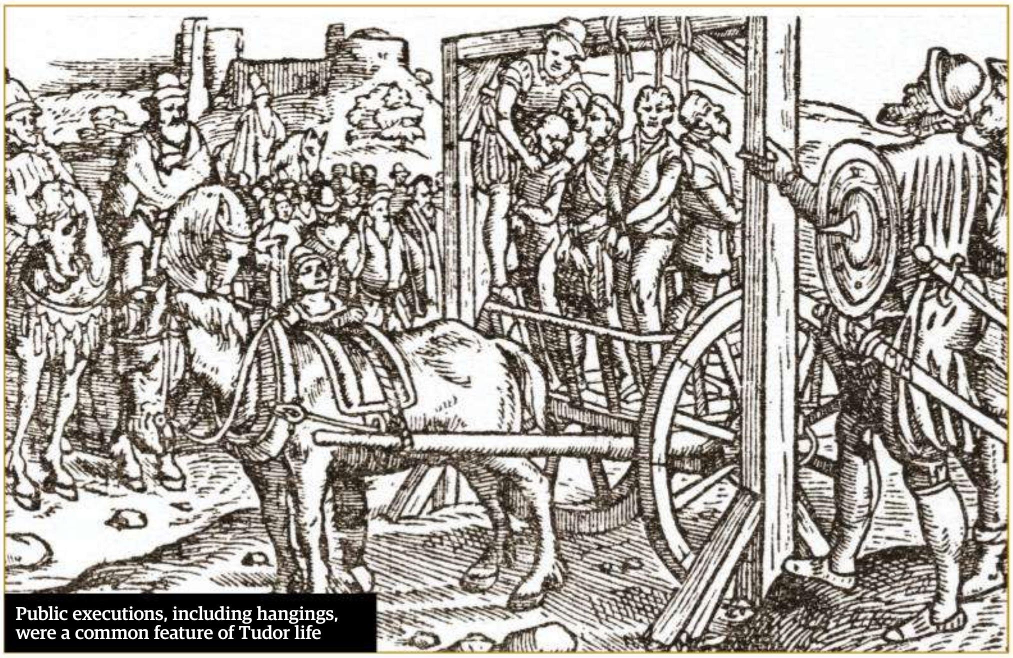
mainly arable to sheep farming, though where possible farmers would maintain mixed farms, also growing barley, peas, grass for animal feed, and raising pigs and poultry.

The principal source of income for many farmers was wool, and the higher-quality pasture of English fields meant that English wool grew finer and longer than much of the continental stock, increasing its value to cloth-makers. Woollen textiles grew in demand, replacing the raw fleeces that had previously been England's main wool export, and generating as much as £1.5 million per year in export trade. Estimates place the population of sheep in the country at the time as two to three times that of the people, and the processes involved in producing textiles – including shearing, spinning, weaving and dyeing – provided reliable, year-round employment for many living in rural communities.

Profitable sheep-rearing required land, and the growing practice of 'enclosure' saw landowners erect fences and hedges around previously open fields and even common land, which had been freely available for the use of peasants to forage and graze pigs, geese and other livestock. Restricting the use of the common land was understandably unpopular, leading to civil unrest and, in some cases, outright rebellion by the peasants against the landowners.

If the villages and hamlets of rural England were the centres of production, the market towns and cities were the centres of commerce. With produce to sell, farmers needed venues at which to trade. While small, local markets, often held on monastery land, were available, the main economic hubs were the country's market towns. Farmers brought their produce to the market towns where they could be traded with craftsmen, merchants and local businesses, to be converted into other goods or transported on to the cities and ports, and from there to Europe.

As domestic production grew, the frequency of market days increased, with many becoming weekly occurrences; the increased popularity of Shrewsbury's markets led to local complaints at the wear and tear on nearby roads caused by the ever-increasing number of visiting market-goers. Town residents made their livings by opening shops that sold goods from the ground-floor windows of their houses, while inns provided bed



Public executions, including hangings, were a common feature of Tudor life

Social reform timeline

ADVANCES IN INDUSTRY AND TUDOR LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THESE LANDMARK CHANGES TO LEGISLATION

1485

1601

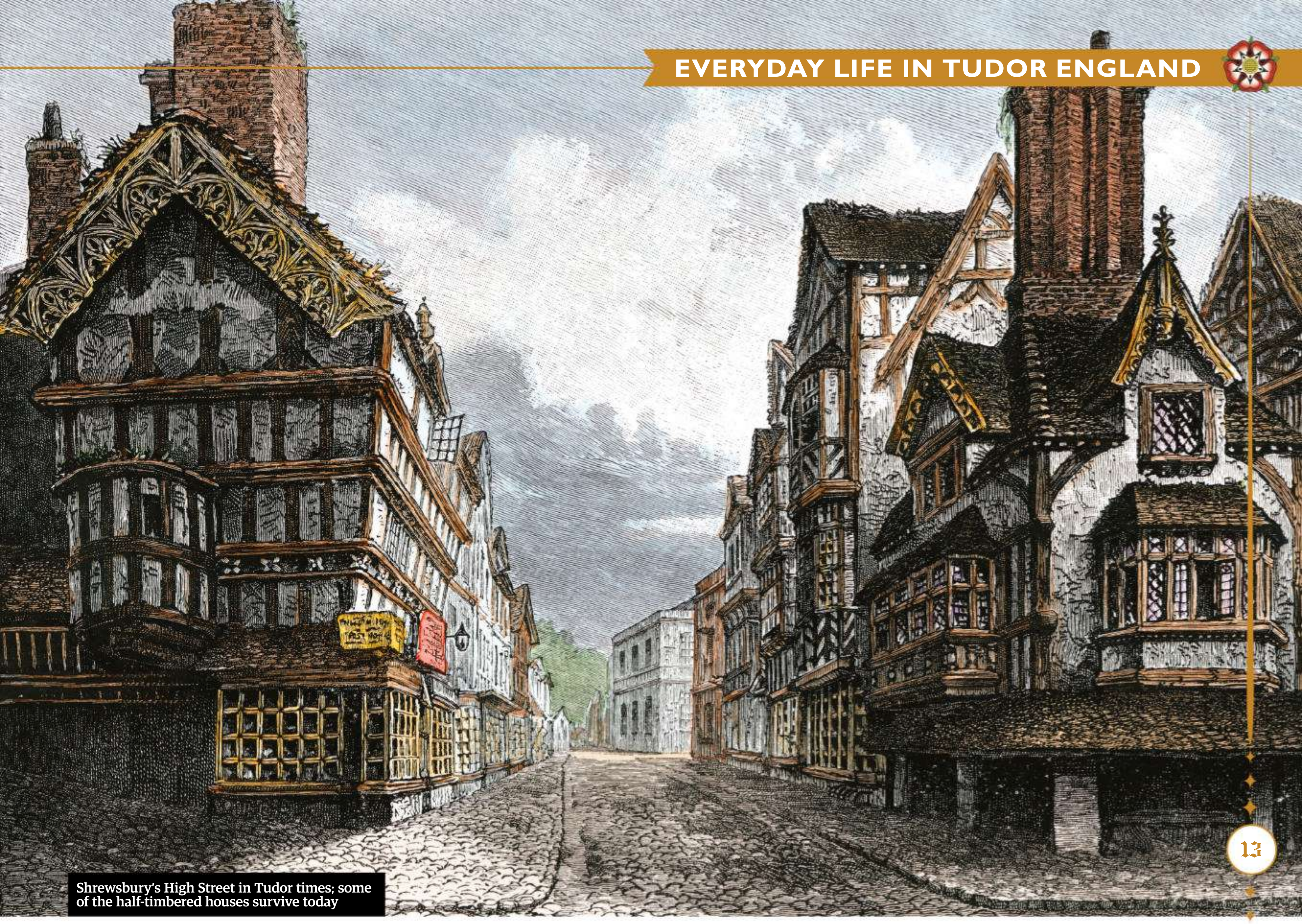
The English Poor Laws
The Poor Laws evolved constantly throughout the 16th century, often focusing on punishments for vagrancy and how beggars might be put to work, but also leading to more positive changes such as statutes that enforced the provision of relief for the poor and providing work for those that could not find employment.
1495-1601

Enclosure
With the rise in demand for wool, landowners looked for ways to increase their profits from the booming cloth trade and began to enclose fields and areas of common land to increase available grazing land. In many cases this led to civil unrest and open rebellion from the peasants.
1489

The English Reformation
Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries had a profound effect on the way the country operated – the lands and schools that had belonged to the monasteries were seized and turned over to noble families to administer, with their associated incomes going to the crown's coffers rather than the Catholic church.
1536-1541

Education for the masses
Edward VI's policy of founding grammar schools that allowed children to study without paying traditional attendance fees provided a huge boost to the nation's levels of education, with learning now freely available to all children and no longer just the preserve of the wealthy and privileged.
1547-1553

Revival of the Heresy Acts
Mary I's reign proved a dangerous period for Protestants, as her desire to see the Catholic church reinstated as England's foremost religion prompted the return of the Heresy Acts and the subsequent persecution and execution of many of England's Protestants, with many so-called heretics burnt at the stake.
1553-1558



Shrewsbury's High Street in Tudor times; some of the half-timbered houses survive today

and board to those that had travelled from afar, as well as a place to relax, socialise and conduct business meetings. Entertainment became important, with the popularity of plays held in the street leading to the construction of the first purpose-built theatre in London in 1576 and heralding an era where attending plays would become a popular pastime for rich and poor alike.

The rural crook house evolved further in the towns and cities into the iconic 'half-timbered' Tudor houses. The box frames allowed construction of two or three storeys, vastly increasing the living space for the families within – a desirable feature in the cramped urban streets where ground-floor space was limited and costly. Better-quality furnishings were more apparent, with four-poster beds becoming as much a status symbol as a comfortable place to sleep.

Thatching was replaced by clay or stone tiles, which in cities lowered the risk of widespread damage in the event of fire; glass windows, though expensive, became more popular as the period wore on. The towns and cities were busy, noisy, thriving places, drawing people from rural communities and abroad with the promise of an affluent lifestyle, though the increased population also brought with it the classic problems of overcrowding; disease, squalor, poor sanitation and increased crime.

While the market towns was a large step in the country's economic progress, its apex lay with the country's major ports. In the early 1500s, almost half of England's wool, and most of its cloth, passed through London's docks, shipped to the Low Countries where cloth-finishing industries would refine it before it returned to England to be sold for a higher price. The relocation of the navy from Portsmouth to the capital saw an explosion in shipbuilding, along with the associated suppliers and trades. Larger ships were built and trade beyond the traditional trading partners of Western Europe became possible, increasing the flow of money into the city.

By 1603, England's international reputation as a major cultural, industrial and economic power was well established; a reputation only made possible by the combined efforts of its people.

Tudor education

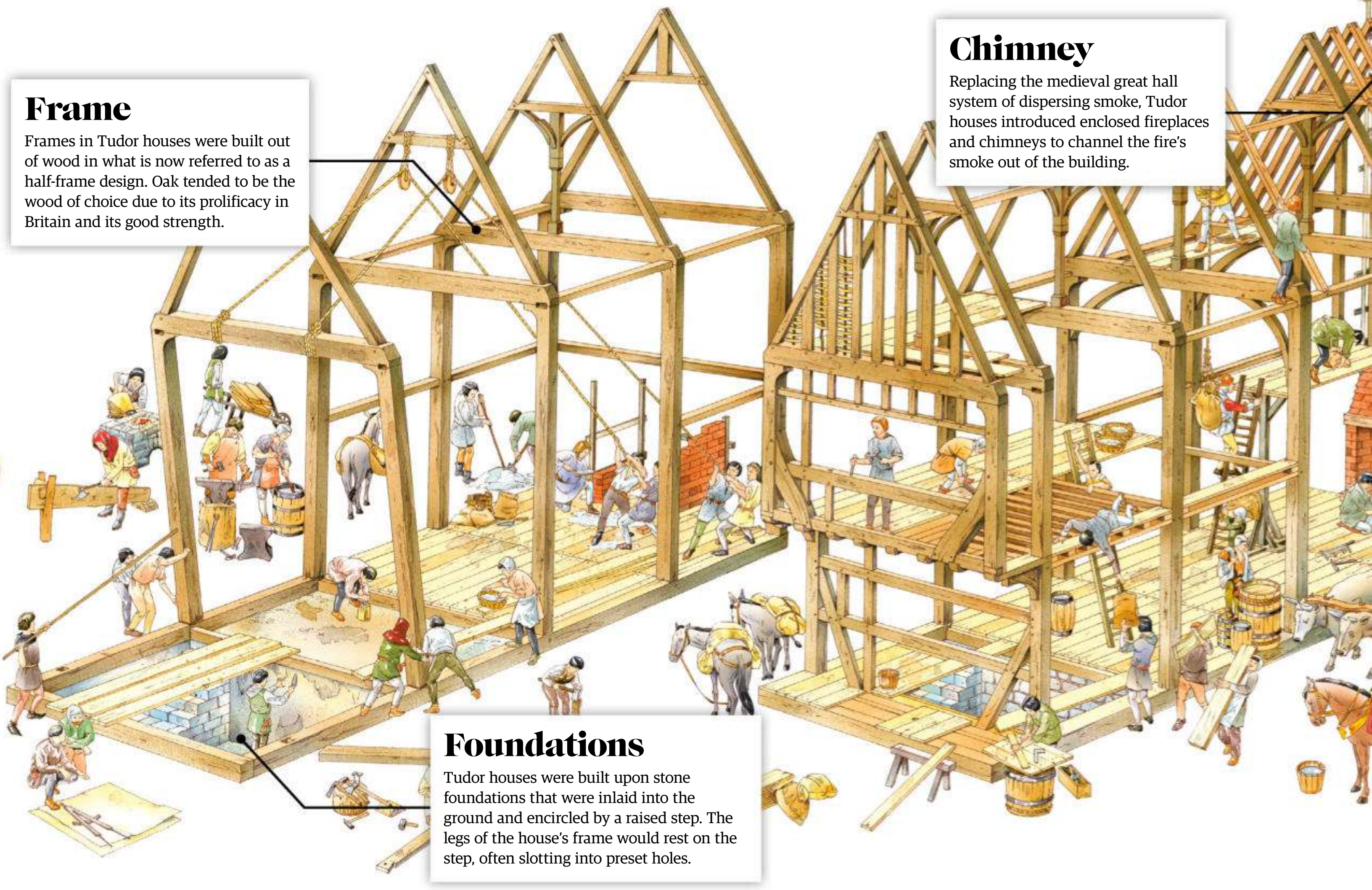
THOUGH AFFECTED BY THE VOLATILE RELIGIOUS CLIMATE, THE TUDOR ERA SAW HUGE STEPS TAKEN IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO THE COMMON CITIZEN

Access to education, although intended more for boys than girls, was much more available in Tudor times than it had been during previous periods. Villages and small towns often had a local parish school where children could be taught to read and write (using hornbooks that featured the alphabet or the Lord's Prayer), while the sons of the middle and upper classes were able to attend, for a fee, 'Petty' (for children aged four to seven) and grammar schools, and perhaps go on to attend university at Oxford or Cambridge. Schools opened six days a week, often from 7am until 5pm, and taught a range of subjects including Latin, Greek, religious doctrine and arithmetic.

The daughters of middle and upper class families usually received private tuition, while the majority of lower-class girls had a more practical education at home, teaching them skills that would aid them in running a household once they married. Any scholarly education they received would likely have been passed on to them by their parents or male siblings. Education suffered during Henry VIII's closure of the monasteries and the schools that were often attached to them, but realising the value of an educated populace, Henry refounded many of the closed schools as 'King's Schools'. Accessible education received another boost during Edward VI's reign with the founding of free grammar schools, raising the standard of learning available to those who had previously found the fees required to send their sons to school too prohibitive.

TUDOR HOUSES

Despite retaining the medieval taste for a Gothic style, the Tudors drove change in how houses were contstructed through the late 15th and 16th centuries



Frame

Frames in Tudor houses were built out of wood in what is now referred to as a half-frame design. Oak tended to be the wood of choice due to its prolificacy in Britain and its good strength.

Chimney

Replacing the medieval great hall system of dispersing smoke, Tudor houses introduced enclosed fireplaces and chimneys to channel the fire's smoke out of the building.

Foundations

Tudor houses were built upon stone foundations that were inlaid into the ground and encircled by a raised step. The legs of the house's frame would rest on the step, often slotting into preset holes.

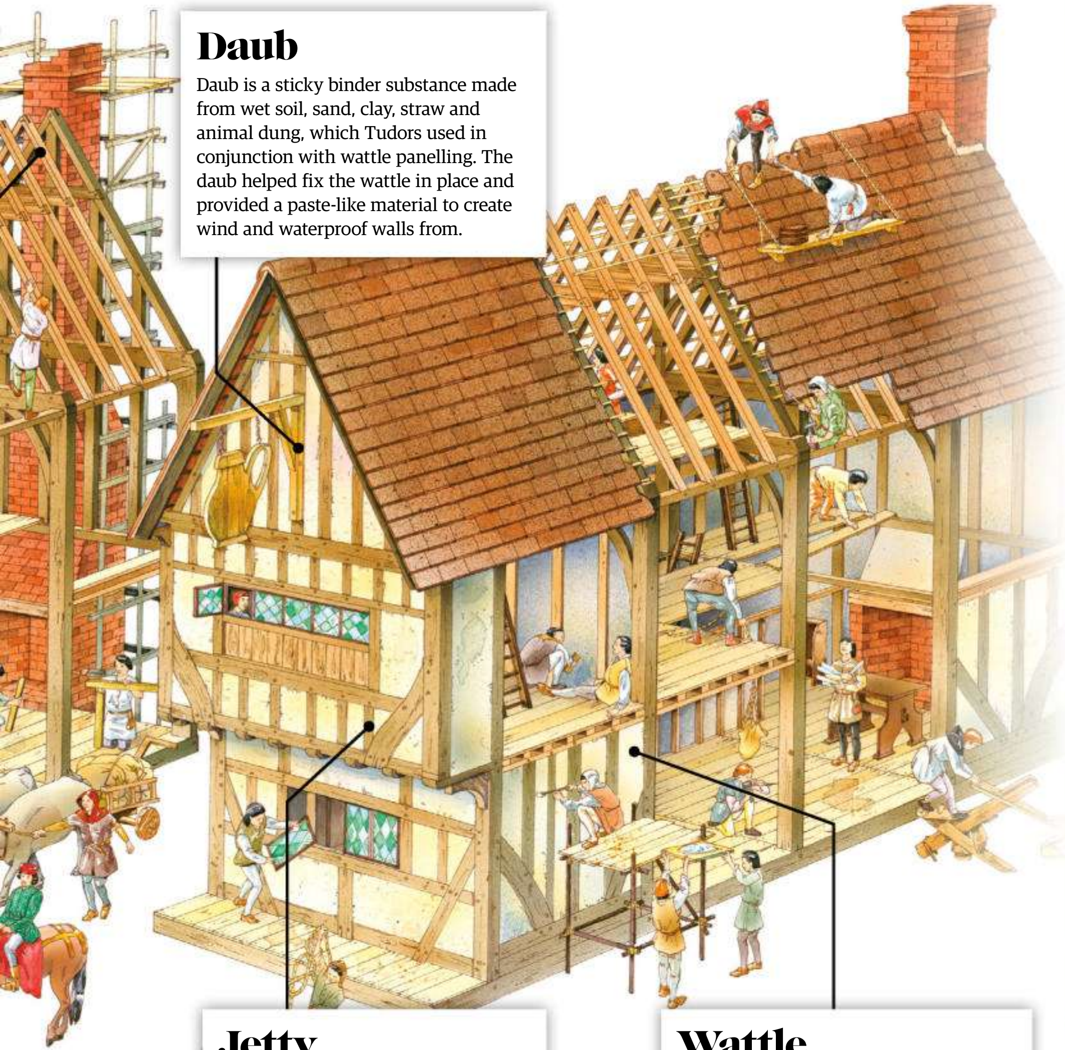
Tudor houses were built following a half-timbered design. First stone foundations were laid and encircled with a raised, hole-filled step, into which timber frames were slotted. The original frame was hoisted into place by manpower alone and then used as a lifting platform to pull up the next frame with ropes.

The frames were typically made out of oak, as the wood was common in Britain at the time and strong considering how easy it was to cut by hand. Due to the beams being cut by the hands of carpenters, they were often rather uneven and - as can be seen today - this led to a slightly bumpy, off-kilter finish. Next the chimney was installed, which for the time was revolutionary. Before Tudor architecture became standard in the 16th century, buildings tended to be heated using the 'great hall' design, where a single large room would house an open fire and disperse smoke through holes in the upper walls and roofing. This led to a heated but smoky main room and was therefore impractical.

The enclosed fireplace and chimney structure allowed Tudor houses to disperse smoke efficiently, allowing for smaller rooms to be heated. During this stage the first floor was boarded and stairs were installed, both made from wood, and the jetty support beams were prepared. Once the building's frame, chimney and floorboards were fitted, the gaps in the timber frames were filled with wattle panelling and then wind and waterproofed with daub - a sticky binder substance. Wattle panelling is characterised by a latticework of thick wooden sticks interwoven to create a flat surface. Daub is a rather primitive form of plaster which is made from a mix of wet soil, sand, clay, straw and animal dung.

When combined these completed the walls of a Tudor house. The building was then roofed, either in thatch - which was common for secular buildings at the time - or crudely tiled, as well as having its windows installed. Glass creation in the Tudor period was primitive compared to today's modern standards, and craftsmen were unable to

> *"Daub is a primitive form of plaster made from a mix of wet soil, sand, clay, straw and animal dung"*



Daub

Daub is a sticky binder substance made from wet soil, sand, clay, straw and animal dung, which Tudors used in conjunction with wattle panelling. The daub helped fix the wattle in place and provided a paste-like material to create wind and waterproof walls from.

Jetty

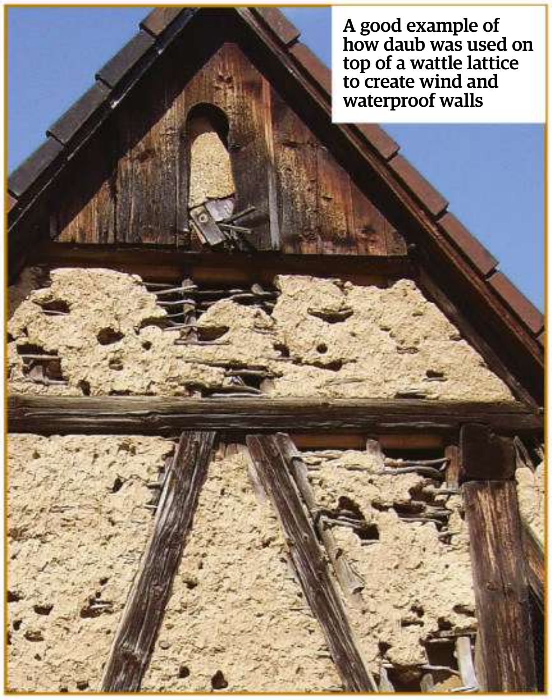
Due to space considerations in cities, many Tudor houses were built with a jetty, which allowed the first floor to overhang the street below.

Wattle

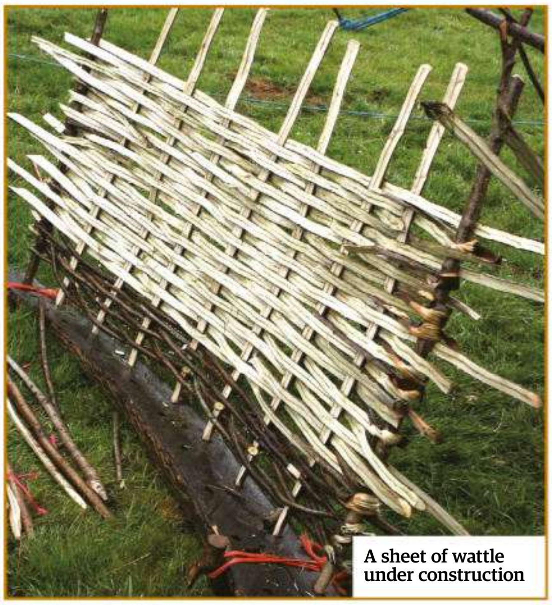
Wattle is a woven lattice of thin wooden branches. Tudor houses used wattle to fill the holes between the timber frames. To affix it in place it was used with daub.

create the necessary large single panes. Tudor windows were therefore constructed from numerous smaller panes which were held together in place by an iron latticework in a tall, thin frame. Due to the combined weight of the iron lattice and thick glass, the wooden window frames needed to be supported by a dedicated wooden beam which was positioned underneath.

Finally the external trim and decorations were completed, which due to the influence of the renaissance on 16th-century Britain led to big changes in artwork, carvings, doors and also window frames. A good example of these changes can be seen in the oriel; this is an overhung, multi-sided window cantilevered out from either the building's first or second floor. Daub tended to be coated in an ochre-coloured pigment, while the wooden beams of the building remained exposed. The archetypal tar-black beams and whitewashed daub were not actually widespread during the Tudor period itself, but more a product of a movement of Victorian romanticisation of the Tudor period later in the 19th century, with many traditional and mock houses being repainted to give them the effect we often see on those that remain today.



A good example of how daub was used on top of a wattle lattice to create wind and waterproof walls



A sheet of wattle under construction

WHO WERE THE BLACK TUDORS?

Dr Miranda Kaufmann discusses her book Black Tudors: The Untold Story and uncovering the lost stories of Black people in Tudor England

WRITTEN BY JESSICA LEGGETT

EXPERT BIO

Dr Miranda Kaufmann is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute Of Commonwealth Studies. To find out more, visit mirandakaufmann.com

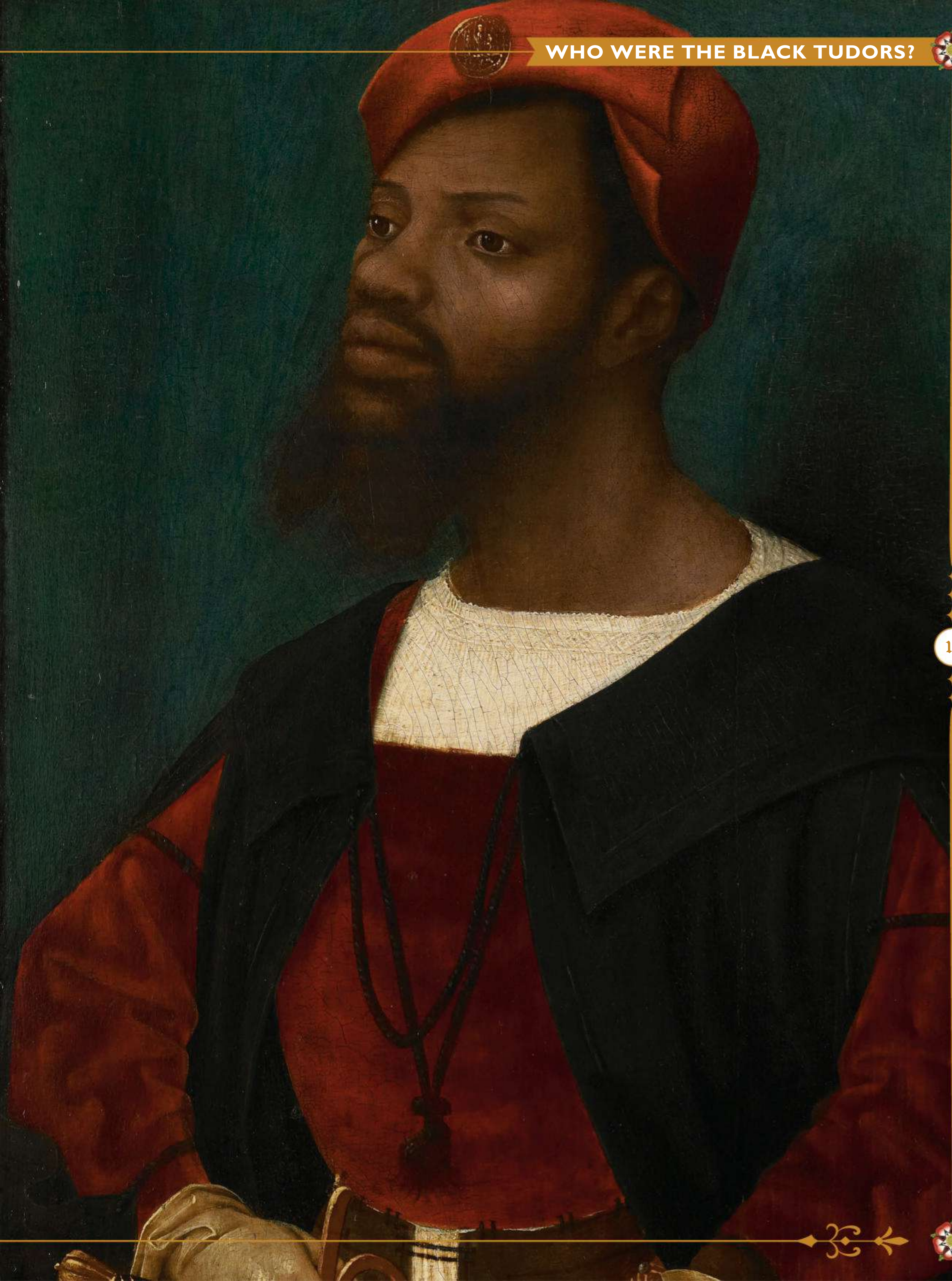
Undoubtedly one of the most popular periods of English history, the Tudor era has been dramatised in various books, television dramas and films, while countless scholars have explored every inch of its history - or so we thought. In her book Black Tudors: The Untold Story, Dr Miranda Kaufmann investigates a part of Tudor history that has been forgotten, exploring the lives of African men and women who lived in Tudor and early Stuart England. Challenging people's preconceptions of Black Tudors, their day-to-day lives, their careers and even their freedom, Kaufmann's illuminating research provides a vital reassessment of English history that changes our understanding of the Tudors as we know them.

What triggered your interest in Black Tudors and why did you decide to write your book?

In my final year as an undergrad at Oxford, I was in a lecture about early modern trade and they mentioned that the Tudors had started trading to Africa in the middle of the 16th century, which was surprising because I had only learnt about the 18th-century trade of enslaved Africans. I found a couple of references in the library to Africans in Elizabethan England and I was inspired to find out more, so that became the subject of my doctorate. I eventually found archival references to over 360 individuals living in Tudor and early Stuart Britain between 1500 and 1640. I wrote the book because I wanted to share what I'd found with the world and change people's perception of British history. The Black presence in Tudor England is an important corrective to the false narrative that Black people first arrived in Britain on the Empire Windrush in 1948. This can feed into a negative perspective on the immigration debate, suggesting that as Black people have only recently arrived here, there is an option for them to 'go home'. Also, the stories were individually fascinating.

How did you piece together the lives of the Black men and women that you wrote about? What sources did you use?

With difficulty! Although other scholars have since published on the topic, those books by Imtiaz Habib and Onyeka Nubia weren't around when I began my research in 2004. Marika Sherwood of the Black and Asian Studies Association was a great help in pointing me towards the primary sources. Parish registers, which record baptisms, marriages and burials, provide information about where and how many people were in the country, but they don't often give a huge amount of biographical information. They might say something like 'John, a Blackamoor, was buried on the 3rd of December', and that's about it, although there is an unusually detailed account of Mary Fillis being baptised at St Botolph's, Aldgate, in 1597. There's a small amount of ▶



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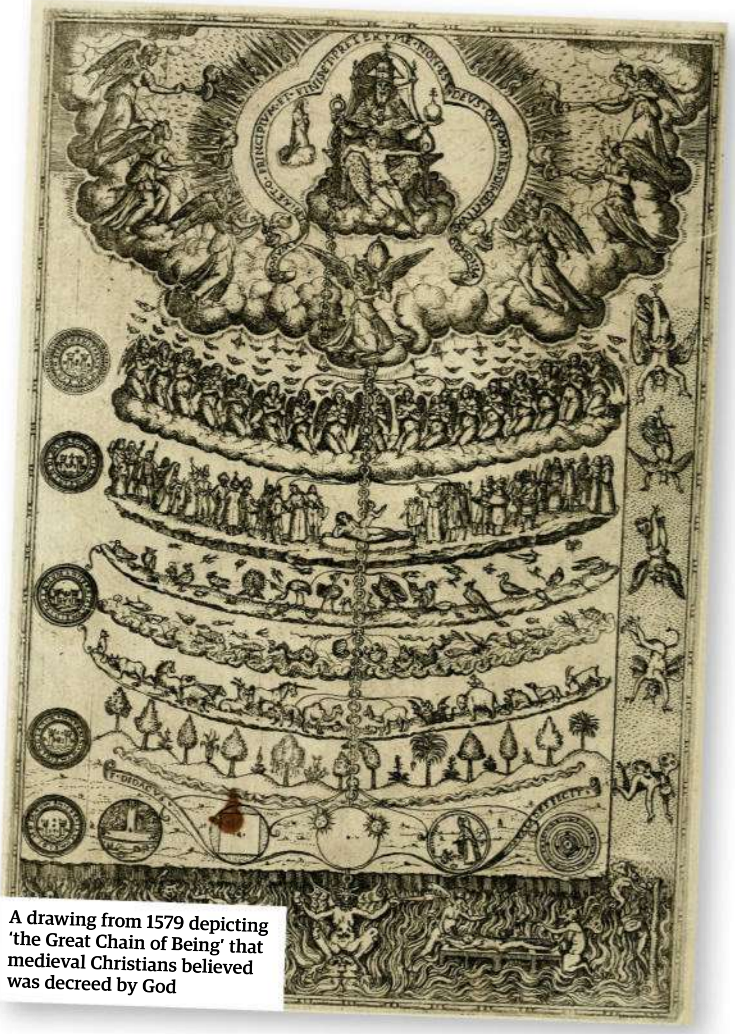
> *"The evidence of Africans being paid wages, testifying in court and intermarrying all suggests a level of civic freedom"*



A drawing from 1579 depicting 'the Great Chain of Being' that medieval Christians believed was decreed by God

visual evidence, such as the two images of John Blanke in the Westminster Tournament Roll, or the portrait of Anne of Denmark with an African attendant. I also used royal and aristocratic household accounts, letters, diaries and state papers. For the book, I often got the most out of legal records that had more detail about people's lives. For example, most of what we know about Jacques Francis, the salvage diver, and Edward Swarthye, comes from the High Court of Admiralty or Star Chamber cases.

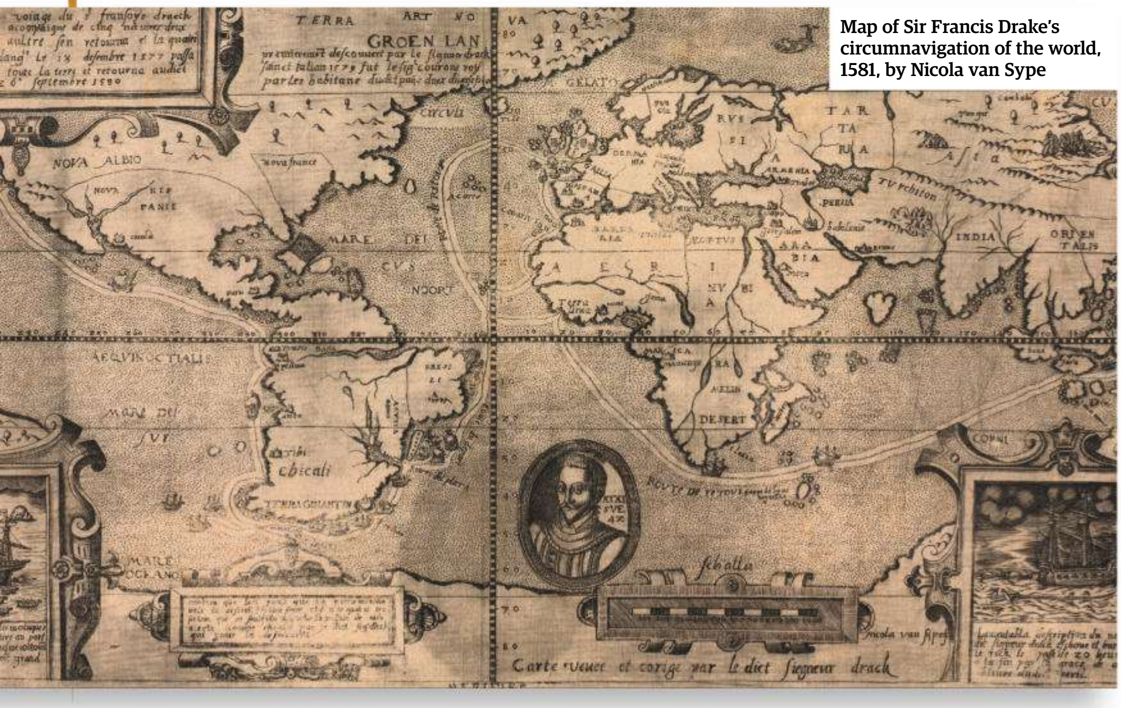
Unfortunately, there aren't any primary accounts by the Black Tudors themselves, so you have to read the sources written by white men backwards and try to grasp the Black experience. A lot of historians looking at Black history encounter this problem. When I couldn't find a huge amount of biographical information about the Black people then I researched the white people in the story and that often led to more insights. When I looked into Sir Edward Wynter's life, I found out how Edward Swarthye likely came to England – Wynter had sailed to the Caribbean with Francis Drake. With John Anthony, who was a sailor in Dover, I did more digging into the ship that he worked on, the Silver Falcon, and learned of her ill-fated voyage to Virginia.

How and when did Black Tudors first arrive in England?

Although an African man named Pero Alvarez from Portugal visited the court of Henry VII in the late-1480s John Blanke, the Tudor court trumpeter, was the earliest person I found living here for a significant period of time. Our first record of Blanke is from 1507 but he probably came with Catherine of Aragon in 1501. Around the same time, there were several Africans at the court of James IV of Scotland. I identified that Africans arrived in Britain in three main ways. Some came from Southern Europe, like Blanke. There was a much higher Black population in Spain, Portugal and to some extent Italy in this period, because those countries were already engaged in enslavement and contact with Africa and had colonies in the Americas. Africans came to England as a side effect of that, with royals like Catherine and Philip II of Spain; with English aristocrats or merchants who travelled in Europe; or with the Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Portugal and Spain. The second way was through direct trade with Africa. For example, Prince Dederi Jaquoah and those before him who came to England learnt English and then went back as traders and interpreters. The final way is through privateering, so when Francis Drake or other privateers captured Africans when they raided Spanish ports or captured Spanish or Portuguese ships – the largest number in this period was the 135 Africans brought to Bristol in 1590 aboard the Charles.

In your book, you discuss how people were more likely to be judged on their religion and social class rather than the colour of their skin. Why was this?

We have to remember that this was a highly religious society and religious identity was central to the way people conceived of themselves. The English went through the Reformation in this period and were increasingly identifying as a Protestant nation. I argue that welcoming Africans into the Protestant faith through baptism is a key indicator of acceptance, they were seen as potential equals in the eyes of God. Meredith Hanmer preached a sermon in 1586 at St Paul's Cathedral on the baptism of a 'Turk' – he was thrilled that the heathen had become a Protestant and that the Spanish had failed to entice him to become a Catholic. As for social class, there was



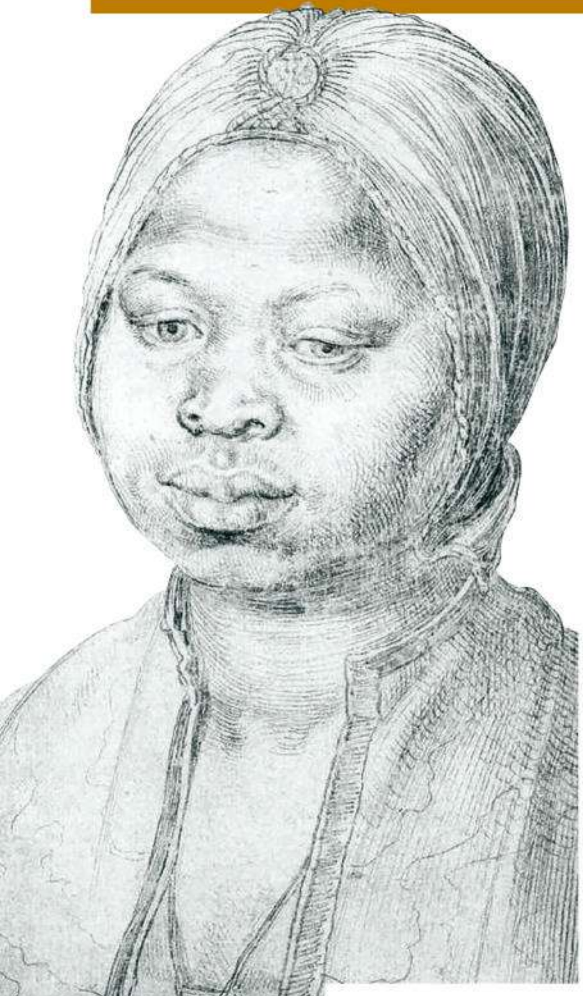
Map of Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the world, 1581, by Nicola van Sype

“Off with her head!”

WHY DID HENRY VIII EXECUTE TWO OF HIS WIVES?

When you look at it numerically, a third of Henry VIII’s wives were executed. Both Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, who were also first cousins, were executed at the Tower of London after Henry decided to be rid of them. Anne’s execution came after a trial that saw her accused of adultery and incest (with her brother, George Boleyn, who was also executed as a result of Anne’s downfall). However, Anne never admitted to any such affairs and maintained her innocence until her death. The allegations against Anne were part of a plot orchestrated by Henry’s right-hand man, Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell had assisted Henry in his mission to obtain a divorce and marry Anne, but had come to dislike the Queen. Anne is said to have disapproved of Cromwell using wealth accumulated from the dissolution of the monasteries to further the ambitions of the monarchy. When Henry began to grow tired of Anne and the fact that she had not yet given birth to a son, Cromwell once again acted in Henry’s interests, and in the process succeeded in removing his own opponent. Anne’s execution in 1536 allowed Henry to remarry, and paved the way for Cromwell to maintain his position of power.

In terms of Catherine Howard’s downfall, it is possible that she had engaged in an affair with Thomas Culpeper, a man who she had previously considered marrying, during her marriage to the King. Also, as a teenager Catherine had been in a relationship with Francis Dereham, with whom she may have exchanged vows or have at least agreed to marry. When information came to light about Catherine’s past, which suggested she had not been a virgin when she married the King, her title as queen consort was removed and she was imprisoned. Dereham and Culpeper were both executed, followed shortly by Catherine in February 1542.



A 1521 portrait of a young African woman, Katherina, by Albrecht Dürer

this idea of ‘the Great Chain of Being’; everybody had their place. The Moroccan ambassadors were received with diplomatic pomp; West African merchants were traded with as equals by English merchants; Francis Drake sees the Panama Maroons as military allies. If you were skilled like Francis the salvage diver, Reasonable Blackman the silk-weaver or John Blanke the musician, then you were respected and remunerated for your work.

Those who had been previously enslaved by the Spaniards and Portuguese and had arrived without a penny to their name were more likely to be treated - not necessarily worse than an impoverished white Englishman - but according to the perception of their social status, and they might end up working as a servant. I think people sometimes see Black people in domestic service and assume it was akin to enslavement because now domestic service isn’t really seen as a career path. Africans were paid wages, just like their white counterparts, which makes it clear they were not enslaved.

In Black Tudors, you include a quote from 1569 that states that England had “too pure an Air for Slaves to breath in”. Did the belief that Black labourers in England were ‘free’ during this period encourage them to move there?

I argue that the Africans were free in England not only because of the idea that setting foot on English soil conferred freedom, but also because there wasn’t any legislation passed delineating enslavement in England in this period, compared to the codes in Portugal or later in France and English colonies like Virginia and Barbados. The evidence of Africans being paid wages, testifying in court and intermarrying all suggests a level of civic freedom. Across the Atlantic world, people were aware that Africans weren’t enslaved in England and someone like Diego [a circumnavigator] might have heard that and taken the risk to get on Drake’s ship rather than stay enslaved in Panama. However, the Africans who arrived in England in this period didn’t always come here of their own volition so were not necessarily ‘voting with their feet’.

Did African women have different experiences compared to African men in Tudor England?

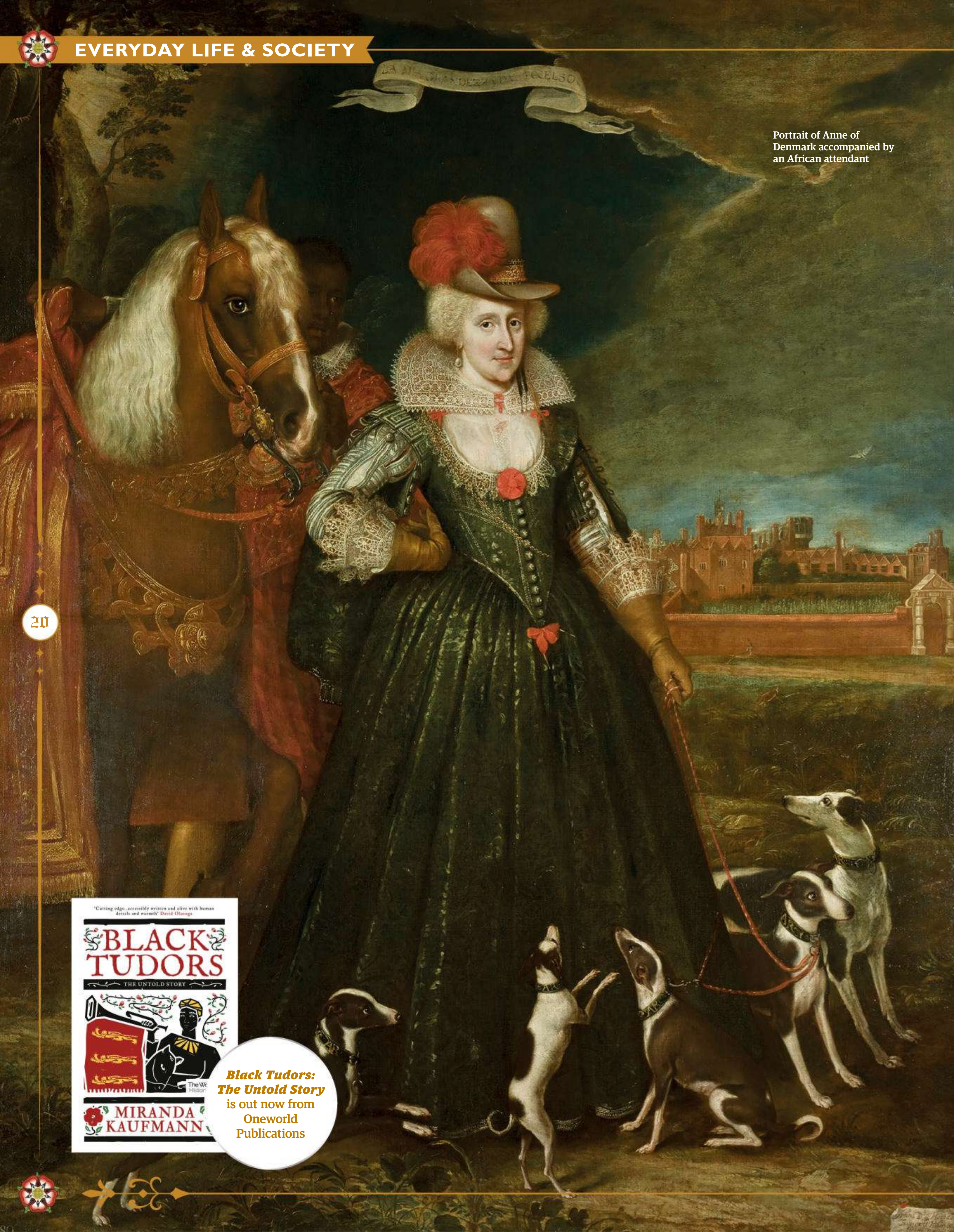
The short answer is yes. Roughly half of the records I found were of women and the original draft of my book had five chapters on women. One was about Maria, who was abandoned on an island in Indonesia by Drake, but as she never actually came to England I couldn’t justify a whole chapter on her, and instead told her story in the Diego chapter. There was another woman called Helen Jeronimo, who was described as a ‘moor’ but I couldn’t be sure if she was of African origin or whether she was from the East Indies because she was the wife of an East India Company sailor. I ended up with chapters on Mary Fillis, Anne Cobbie and Cattelena of Almondsbury, who all had an interesting range of experiences.

Fillis shows that you could develop a skill like being a seamstress that might allow you at least some level of financial independence, and Cattelena of Almondsbury is independent and able to make a small living for herself, with the help of her cow. In a way, I would rather not have included Cobbie because although there’s a preconception that if there were African women in Tudor London then they were probably prostitutes, there is very little evidence of that. In fact, there is more evidence of African men visiting English sex workers than the other way around.

What preconceptions do we have today about Black Tudors in England?

Well, the main preconceptions are that there weren’t any, or if there were that they were enslaved and that there weren’t many women. Often people know a bit more about the Black presence in the 18th century and read stuff backwards, reaching false conclusions. It is assumed Africans were living lives of drudgery and pain and people don’t expect them to have skills like salvage diving or silk-weaving. They might think of musicians because of the long-held association of Africans with music, and perhaps of Africans in royal or aristocratic households, partly because they might have seen portraits from a later period or other countries showing royals and aristocrats with Black attendants. ▶

Images © Alamy, Getty, Wikipedia


'Cutting edge...accessibly written and alive with human details and warmth' David Olusoga
BLACK TUDORS
THE UNTOLD STORY
MIRANDA KAUFMANN

Portrait of Anne of Denmark accompanied by an African attendant

Black Tudors: The Untold Story is out now from Oneworld Publications

However, my research shows that a lot of Black Tudors were working in much more humble households like that of a London beer brewer or a seamstress; or that in a few cases they were independent, living their own lives.

Your book focuses on ten Black men and women from the Tudor and Stuart periods. Whose story fascinated or surprised you the most?

I think I was always most engaged with whoever I was writing about at the time. Diego's story is brilliant because it's an exciting global adventure, with the Maroon alliance and his untimely death from an arrow wound sustained off the coast of Chile. Swarthye's story is the most surprising: an African man whipping an Englishman. The testimony in which he describes the event was in very bad handwriting (of a court scribe, not Swarthye himself) and I couldn't make it out at first. The first word that I identified was 'whip' with a double 'p', and I assumed that the Black man was being whipped by the white man, as was the case for so much of our later history. It was only when I deciphered the whole document that I realised it was the other way around. The fact that John Anthony, a free waged sailor, was bound for Virginia in 1619, the inaugural year of African American history, was a striking contrast to the experience of the 20 or so Africans who actually became the first to arrive in Jamestown that summer.

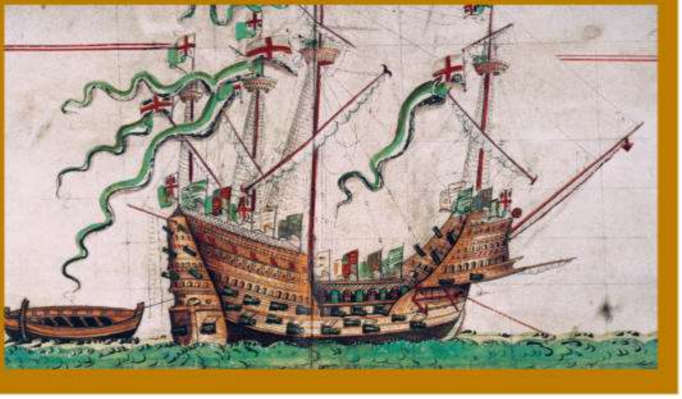
What do you hope readers will take away from Black Tudors?

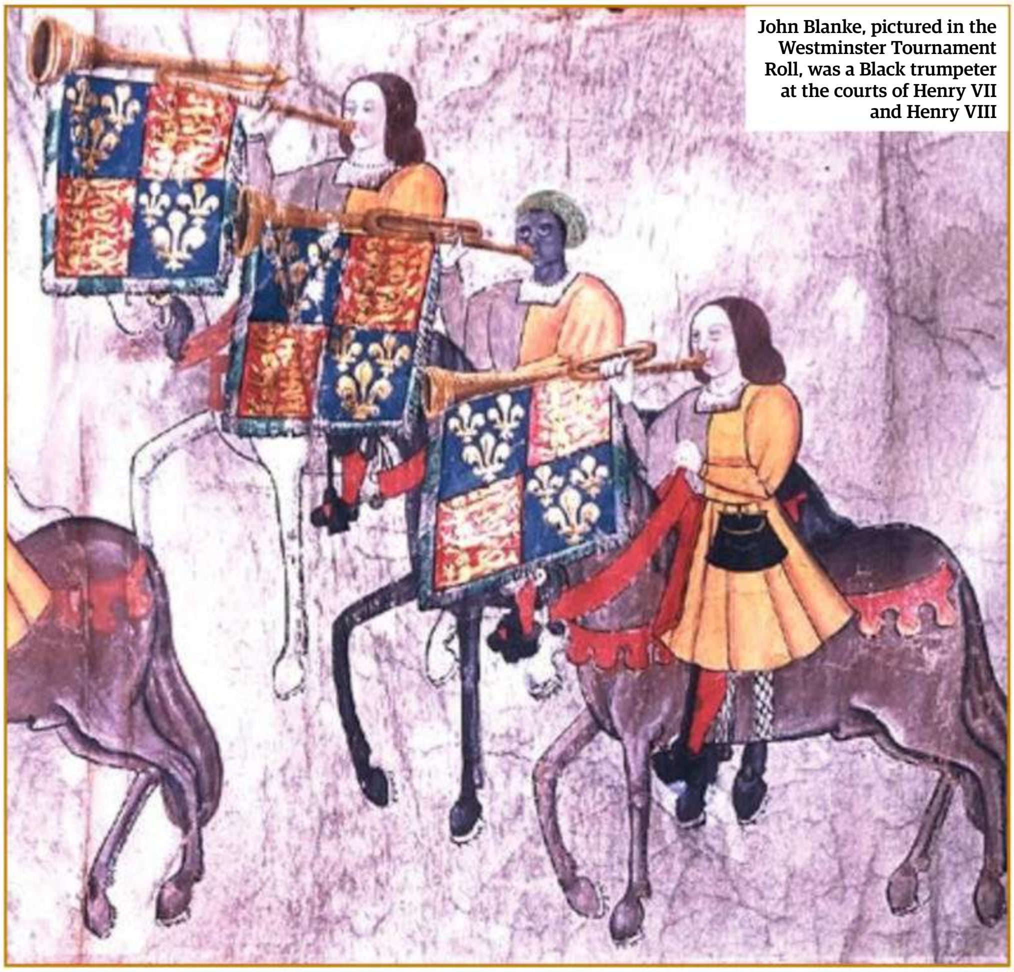
It depends who the reader is! The first thing that I wanted to put across was simply that Black Tudors were here. To give people a different perspective by showing that British history is a lot more diverse than they think and also raise questions, like was it inevitable that white people would enslave Black people in our history? What changed in the 17th century that created all the pain and misery of enslavement and racism that followed afterwards? I want teachers to teach it in schools and I'm working with a group of secondary school teachers now on a project called #TeachingBlackTudors [mirandakaufmann.com/blog/teaching-black-tudors], creating Black Tudors teaching resources with a major educational publisher. I want it in museums and I want to change the traditional narrative of British history. This is beginning to happen: Francis now features at the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth; Diego's story is now told at the National Maritime Museum and the National Trust's Buckland Abbey (Drake's former home near Plymouth), as part of the Colonial Countryside project. I would like the next generation of historians to build on my work, do some more digging and find out more. I hope it's a starting point that brings people to Black British history and takes them on different journeys.

Salvaging the Mary Rose

HOW AN AFRICAN MAN BECAME ONE OF THE FIRST TO SEE THE WRECK OF THE MARY ROSE

There are many interesting stories to uncover in Kaufmann's book Black Tudors, but the tale of Jacques Francis is one of the most fascinating. Born in Guinea, West Africa, in the 1520s, it is likely that Francis would have been trained as a pearl diver and, in fact, many Africans were skilled free-divers. In comparison most Tudors, including sailors, couldn't even swim. Although we don't know exactly how he ended up there, Francis found work as a salvage diver in Southampton, working for a Venetian salvage operator named Peter Paulo Corsi when he was around 18 years old. In July 1545, the Mary Rose – one of the largest ships in the English Navy – sank in the Solent, a tragedy witnessed by King Henry VIII himself from Southsea Castle. The weapons aboard the ship were very expensive and after an initial attempt to raise the ship failed that August, Corsi was hired to recover the weaponry in 1547. Francis, an expert swimmer and diver, was chosen to lead the team of eight divers. It's possible that two of the other team members were of African origin too, and together they succeeded in recovering some of the guns from the wreck. Following another salvage operation in the Solent, Corsi was accused of theft by Italian merchants and the case was brought to the High Court of Admiralty. Most of what we know about Francis is thanks to the records from this case because he testified on his master's behalf, becoming the first African to give evidence in an English court of law.





John Blanke, pictured in the Westminster Tournament Roll, was a Black trumpeter at the courts of Henry VII and Henry VIII

Images © Alamy, Getty, Wikipedia

RELIGION & REFORMATION

During the Tudor era, England experienced sweeping and dramatic religious upheaval; it changed life for everyone

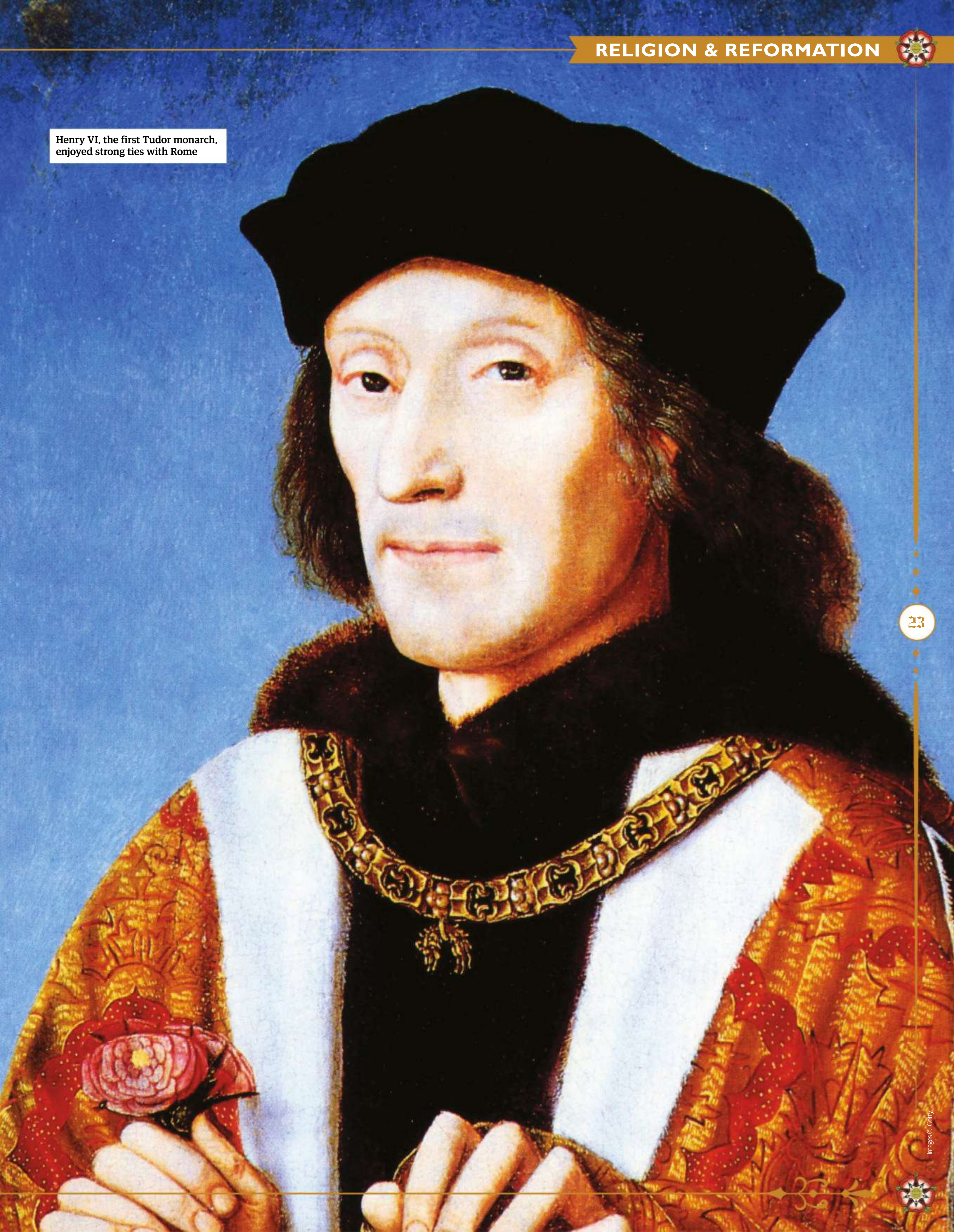
WRITTEN BY CATHERINE CURZON

In the Tudor era, England went through a tumultuous religious upheaval not once, but three times. From Roman Catholic to Protestant twice over, the Tudor monarchs reshaped the Church according to their own ambitions. In doing so, they changed the face of England. Though Henry VIII would challenge the established religious order in England, ever since Pope Gregory I's missionary evangelised the Kingdom of Kent in 597, the country had become a Catholic one. For nearly 1,000 years the Roman Catholic Church was the dominant form of Christianity and for King Henry VII, the first Tudor monarch, it played an important part in the alliances he made and the way in which he governed his kingdom. Although things would change under the rule of Henry VIII, his father enjoyed a close relationship with Rome and Catholicism played an important role in the daily life of everyone in England. The Pope, rather than the sovereign, had authority over all spiritual matters and church courts were responsible for dealing with laws of blasphemy and heresy, as well as matters concerning the clergy.

The parish church was the centre of the community, and the priest was supposedly the man who guided his flock. Donations from parishioners to the Church and its monasteries and convents were generous, but the Bible's Latin text placed it outside the understanding of the vast majority of people. Instead, they were dependent on their priests to interpret the Bible and its teachings at weekly mass, where the whole community would gather to worship as one. The Church owned a vast amount of land and commanded huge wealth, its dominance ensuring power and influence for those who held high clerical office or were willing to further its work. Inevitably, not everybody was guided by pure motives. Such was the power of the Roman Catholic Church, however, that only a small minority openly questioned the doctrines of Catholicism. To do so was to risk being branded a heretic and, in some cases, would be a death sentence.

Thanks to Henry VII's close ties with Rome, during his reign the Church's already immense wealth and influence expanded still further. Across the country grand churches were constructed and those that already existed were greatly embellished, often using money collected from the local congregation. Henry VII understood that his religious faith could also bring other benefits, and he leveraged his relationship with Rome to build and strengthen political alliances, even managing to convince Pope Innocent VIII to silence any rebellions he might face by issuing a Papal Bull that threatened to excommunicate all pretenders to the king's throne.

Yet even as Henry VII enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with the Church, not everyone was so enamoured of the Roman Catholic regime



Henry VI, the first Tudor monarch, enjoyed strong ties with Rome

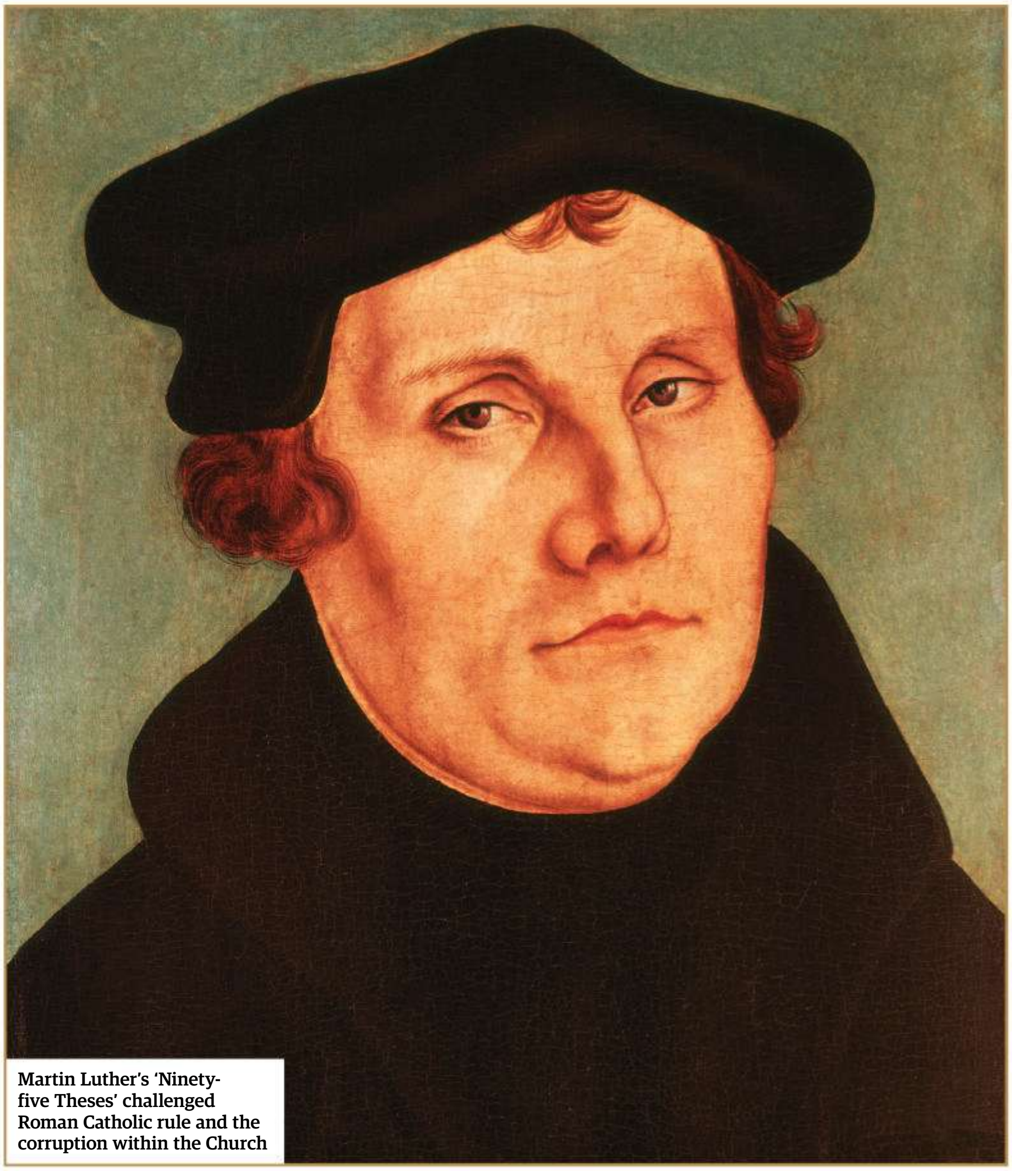
Images © Getty

and by the time Henry VIII inherited the throne in 1509, there were grumblings across society. As the Church's strength grew unchecked, worshippers began to notice that some priests barely visited their parish, while those that did frequently flouted their vows. This was at the same time as preaching for their congregation to obey the holy laws that they themselves ignored. It seemed that there was one rule for the powerful corrupt, with positions and favours being traded to the highest bidder, and one for the person in the street, who attended Mass and gave what they could and followed the teachings of the Bible that some of their supposed betters seemed to ignore.

Things came to a head in 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his 'Ninety-five Theses' to the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg. The work attacked the corruption of the Catholic Church, especially the practice of selling "indulgences" to absolve sin. Man could not buy his way to heaven, wrote Luther, the only way to salvation was through true belief in God, and the only religious authority was the Bible itself. It was the start of the Protestant Reformation.

Henry VIII was so outraged by Luther's work that he hit back, writing a book in defence of Catholicism, which Pope Leo X rewarded with the title of Fidei Defensor (Defender of the Faith), in recognition of the King's devotion to Rome. Few could imagine how different things would look in just a few years, when Henry's own actions swept away the established religious order of Tudor England, cementing the dominance of the monarch over the Church and removing the previously unshakeable power of the Pope in England. Henry VIII, however, wasn't motivated by religious faith, but by something far closer to home.

Desperate to secure a male heir to his throne, Henry was keen to annul his marriage to 40-year-old Catherine of Aragon, who also happened to be the widow of his late brother. As the years passed and no male heir came along, Henry convinced himself that his marriage to Catherine had been cursed by God and, in 1527, he asked Pope Clement VII to annul the marriage. Since Rome was in the hands of Catherine's nephew, Charles V, the Pope refused the King's request. Though there has been much debate over the extent to which the King's wish for an annulment was the motivation for the Reformation in England, it was certainly the final straw that forced Henry's hand.


Martin Luther's 'Ninety-five Theses' challenged Roman Catholic rule and the corruption within the Church

Once the refusal had been issued, Henry began the process that would strip the Roman Catholic Church of authority in England. The first stage was to ensure that any canon laws could not be passed without royal assent; next was the removal of the right to appeal legal cases outside England, ensuring that the Vatican could no longer have any influence over the outcome of legal issues that occurred in the monarch's realm. Finally, in November 1534, the Act of Supremacy formally abolished papal authority in England and enshrined King Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. The clergy had two choices: they could accept the new order or face the consequences; unsurprisingly, the majority chose to accept. The public, however, had no choice but to accept the change, while for the gentry and nobility, the Reformation offered an opportunity to finally suppress the previously dominant power of the clergy.

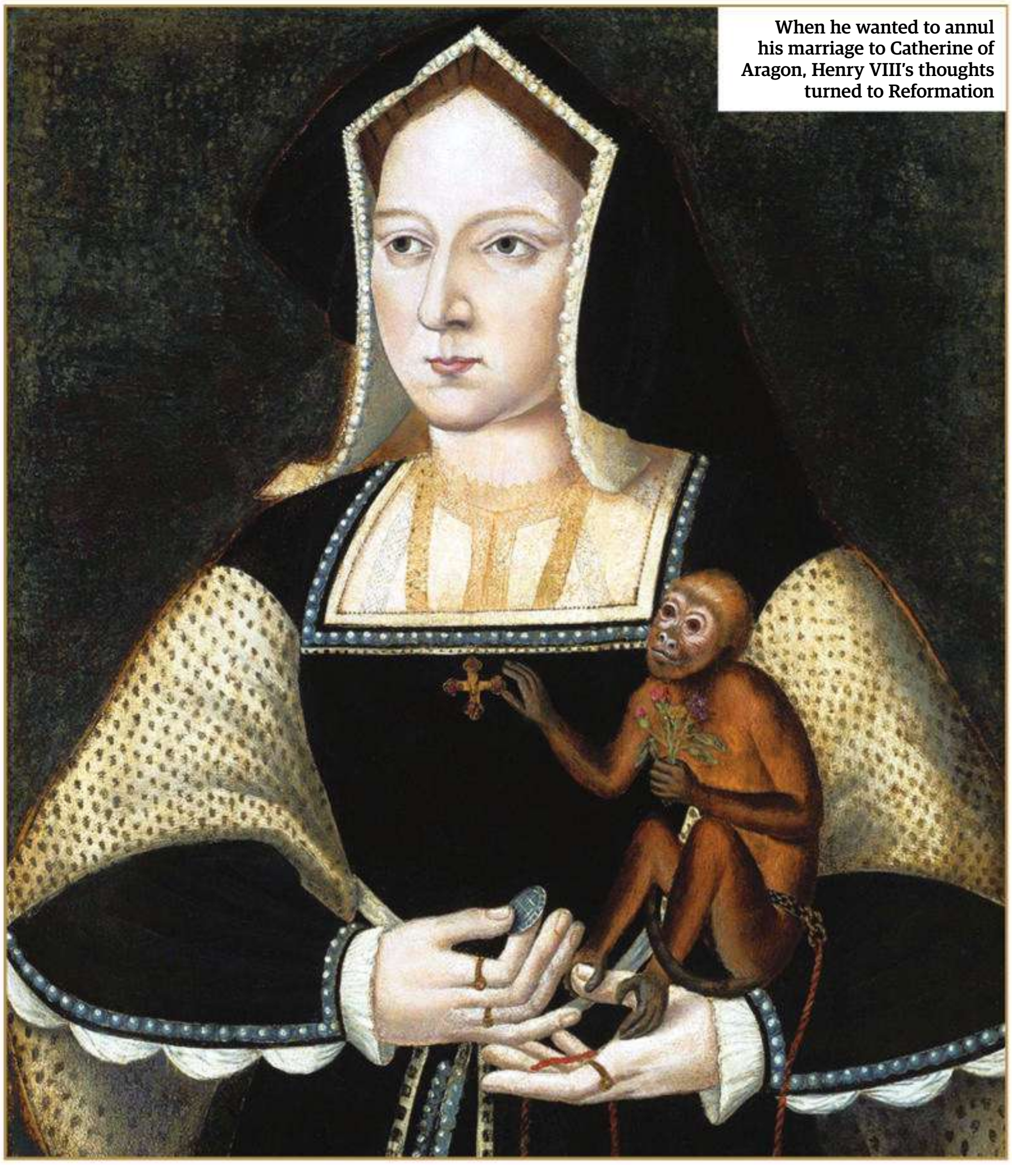
Henry ordered the dissolution of the monasteries, while the institutions and buildings that symbolised Catholic authority were closed, and in some cases, their inhabitants put to death. Statues were beheaded or artworks defaced by Protestants, who believed that depicting Christ and the saints was an act of idolatry. Although some worshippers quietly accepted the vandalism, in Yorkshire in 1536, outraged people rebelled against the dissolution of their monasteries. The protests spread across the north, resulting in the largest peacetime revolt England had ever seen. The immense wealth that the Catholic institutions had possessed was confiscated and Church land was sold off to the highest bidder, or even granted to royal favourites in recognition of their support - but also as a subtle way of keeping them under the royal thumb. With so much land, power and wealth up for grabs, ambition trumped faith; once the all-powerful spiritual centre of England, the Catholic Church found itself with few who were willing to stand up for it against Henry VIII.

However, although Henry rejected the authority of Rome, he remained a committed follower of Catholic doctrine. Heretics continued to be burned, a punishment that was only stopped during the reign of Protestant Edward VI, before being enthusiastically brought back under Catholic Mary I, during her efforts to restore the previous status quo. Though Henry had installed Protestant Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury, the first announcements Henry made as head of the Church of England simply maintained traditional Catholic practices and doctrines, with a sprinkling of Lutheranism, such as the importance of faith over good deeds and the introduction of three, not seven, sacraments.

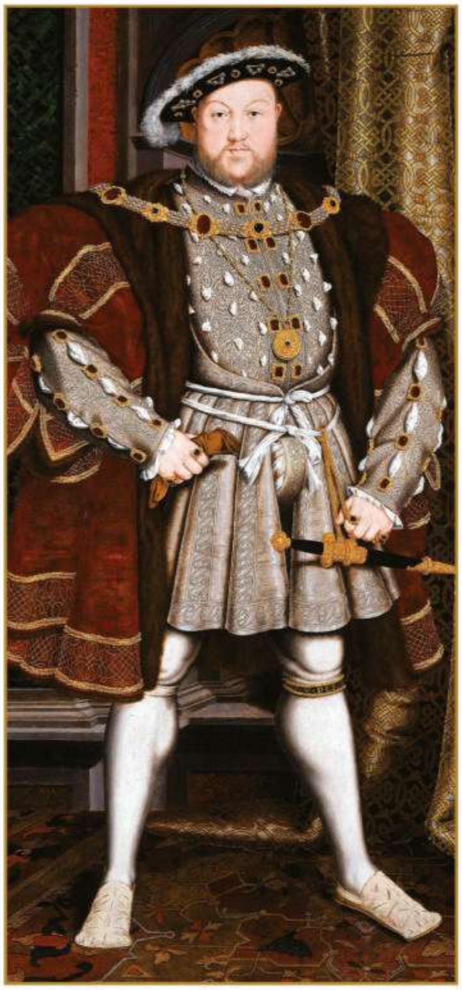
When Henry VIII died in 1547 and his nine-year-old son, Edward VI, succeeded to the throne, his youth set the stage for the next period of reform. Under the watchful eye and guidance of the young King's councillors, the Church of England completed its transformation into a fully Protestant Church. A new Book of Homilies condemned the Catholic staples of holy water, rosary beads, relics and more. The Latin rites were replaced by English liturgy and the remaining traces of Roman Catholic domination were eradicated from English churches. Yet, just as it seemed that England was setting into its new faith, things changed again.

Edward VI died in 1553 and his Roman Catholic half-sister, Mary, came to the throne. She immediately set about reversing the religious policies of her predecessors and re-established England's connections with Rome. She repealed all religious legislation passed under Edward VI and offered Protestants a simple choice between exile, conversion or death. Hundreds of people were imprisoned, hanged or burned for heresy during the inquisitions that occurred during the Queen's five-year reign, earning her the nickname 'Bloody Mary'. At the time of her death in November 1558, Mary left no heir and a kingdom riven by fear and religious conflict. It was to prove a key issue for Mary's successor, her half-sister Elizabeth I, to resolve.

When Elizabeth inherited the throne, England was bitterly divided. It had lurched from Catholicism to Protestantism and back, the pace and violence of change leaving the people exhausted and confused. Recognising the importance of establishing and maintaining a status quo that had been sorely lacking, the Elizabethan Religious Settlement attempted to settle things once and for all. The Act of Supremacy of 1558 re-established the Church of England's independence, with Elizabeth named as Supreme Governor. Then in 1559, the Act of Uniformity re-introduced the Book of Common Prayer, which had been suppressed by Mary. ▶



When he wanted to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's thoughts turned to Reformation



What did Henry VIII really believe?

HENRY VIII CHANGED ENGLISH RELIGION FOREVER, BUT WERE HIS MOTIVES PURELY SELFISH?

For much of his life, Henry VIII was a devoted and committed Catholic, a true defender of the faith. However, when he sought an annulment of his marriage and was denied, the subsequent Reformation wiped out Roman Catholic supremacy in England, replacing it with the Church of England. Historians continue to debate whether he was motivated purely by selfish reasons or because he truly wanted to end the corruption he witnessed in the Catholic Church.

Even after the Reformation, Henry continued to follow a mostly Catholic faith, but he believed above all that he had been divinely chosen to rule. For Henry, perhaps it wasn't a question of Protestants versus Catholics, but of why the Pope should enjoy any authority over God's chosen monarch. By installing himself as the head of the Church of England, Henry had merely elevated himself to the place that he believed was his: the voice of God's authority in the kingdom that he ruled. There would be no other authority in Henry VIII's realm, short of God himself.

Images © Alamy, Getty, Wikipedia

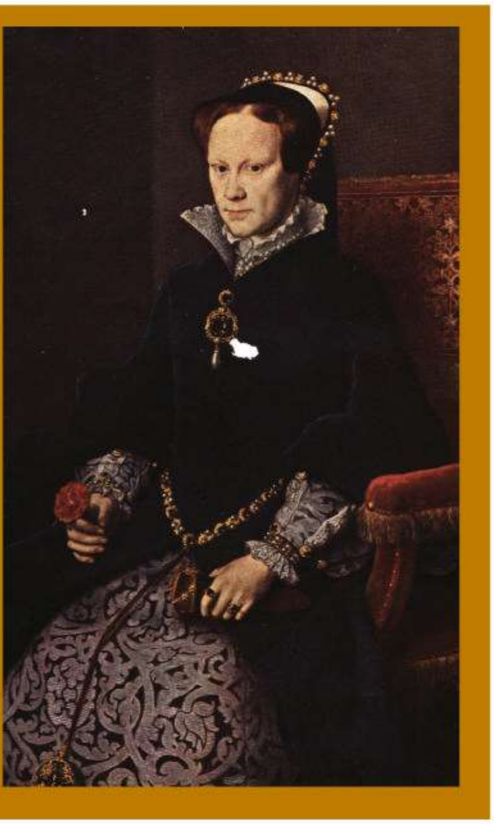
Bloody Mary?

DOES MARY I DESERVE THE NICKNAME THAT HAUNTS HER?

Queen Mary saw approximately 300 people executed for their faith during the Marian persecutions; her apparent lust for death earned her the nickname, 'Bloody Mary'. However, whether she actually deserves the title remains up for debate.

Mary's reputation rests in a large part on Protestant author John Foxe, whose 1563 work, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, details every martyr who was executed for their faith. It was a bestseller that featured scores of lurid illustrations, many depicting the executions of Mary's reign, alongside evocative accounts of the Protestant martyrs who went to their deaths under her rule.

When you consider the sheer number of executions in a relatively short period of five years, Mary's body count is certainly high, but it pales against that of Elizabeth I and Henry VIII. What sets her apart is that they were all in the name of one thing: religion. Add to that the fact she was a woman, expected to be gentle and passive rather than burning with the fervour of persecution, and Mary becomes a tyrant, setting light to those who dare dissent. She will, it seems, carry her Bloody Mary title through the centuries yet to come.



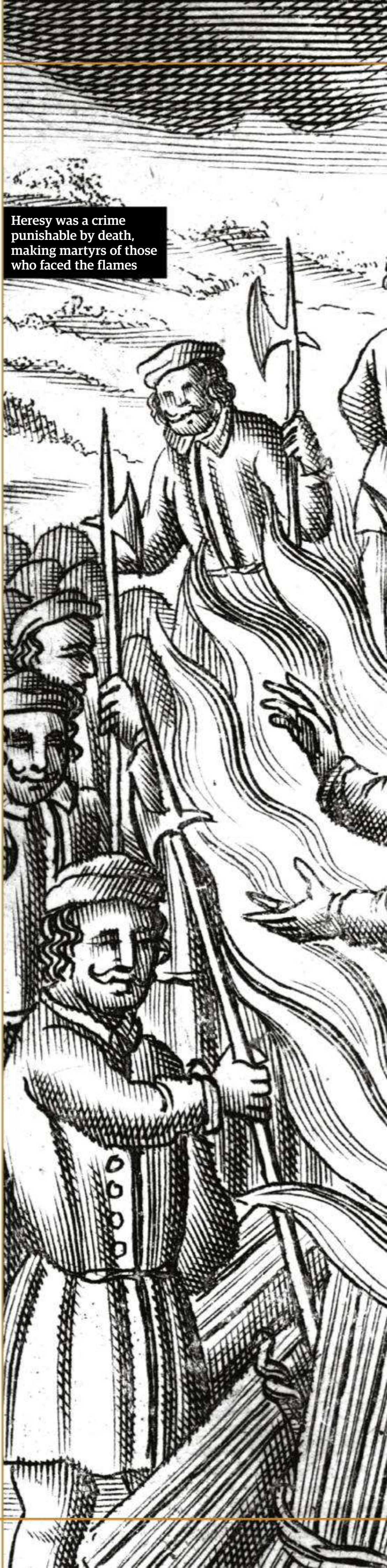
Catholic practices were overturned, Latin silenced and, once again, England became a Protestant country.

Despite the Queen's efforts, though, religious turmoil continued to rumble for years. Some remained loyal to Rome, while the Church of England itself split into factions. Yet despite this, Queen Elizabeth I's efforts to calm the turbulent waters she inherited were both necessary and decisive. Unlike Mary, Elizabeth was conservative in her approach to change, attempting to bring in the new measures without causing offence or panic to Catholic rulers overseas, or to powerful Catholics at home. Yet for the ordinary people of Tudor England, these changes must have been absolutely bewildering. Long-established churches and other houses of worship had been vandalised, statues beheaded, and shrines and images defaced or simply whitewashed over. These were replaced under Mary, only to be destroyed again under Elizabeth.

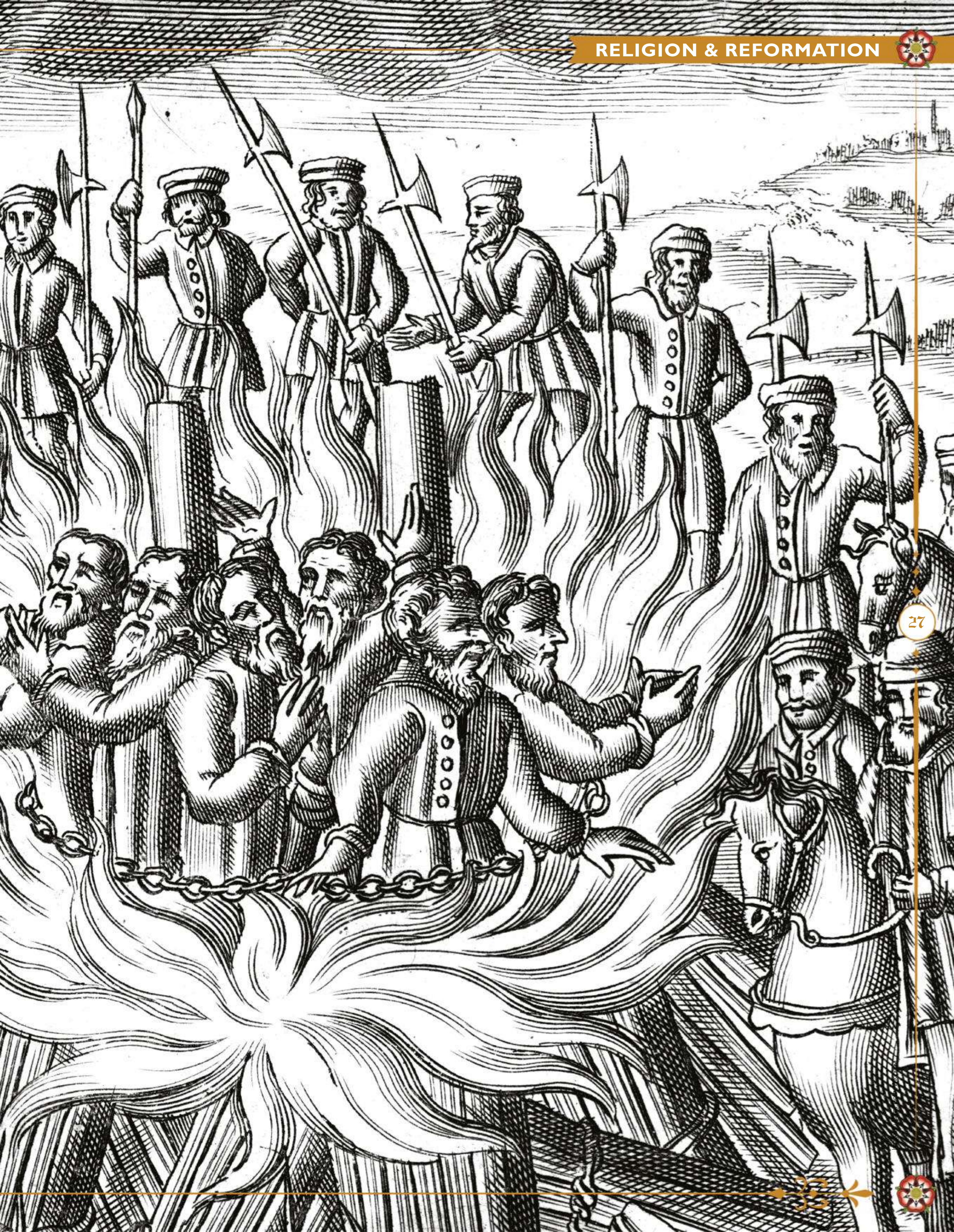
However, the once arcane and inaccessible Latin rites were now accessible to all who could read in an English-language Bible, while at services, congregations listened to English sermons, meaning that literacy was no longer a barrier to worship. Though Elizabeth knew that some of her subjects would be publicly loyal to Protestantism while harbouring Catholic hearts, laws came into being that made the price of such sympathies clear. All who held public office had to take an oath of belief in royal supremacy over the Church, and any who defended papal authority over the Church were subject to punishments ranging from confiscation of goods to death. To be a Catholic in England became an act of high treason punishable by death and any parishioners who missed church on Sunday were to be fined. At a time when many were desperately poor, the shilling fine for missing a service might as well have been a fortune. It was a subtle but highly effective form of control.

With the dissolution of the monasteries, wealth and land was redistributed to the wealthy, increasing their power as that of the Roman Catholic Church declined. For the first time, the sovereign held power over every aspect of the kingdom, unchecked by Rome. It changed everything about life, from worship to the social structure and, as the years passed, led to conflicts that would have an impact on every single life, from the sovereign down.

In Tudor England, the switching back and forth between faiths struck at the heart of religious belief in the common people and the laws Elizabeth passed in 1559 made a matter of conscience into a potential crime. The choice was simple: either conform to the wishes of the latest monarch or face the consequences. It comes as little surprise that most people simply put their heads down and, in public, went along with the prevailing new order. However, the discovery of secret chapels and priest holes points to the dissent that was going on behind the scenes. In a Protestant kingdom, Catholics went to ground and worshipped in secret.



Heresy was a crime punishable by death, making martyrs of those who faced the flames



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REBELS & REVOLTERS

Uncover the most significant rebellions against the Tudor dynasty

WRITTEN BY EMILY STANIFORTH

Between 1485 and 1603, the Tudor dynasty reigned supreme over England. Of the five Tudor monarchs who sat on the English throne, all faced the threat of usurpation and rebellion against their ever-changing political and religious policies that kept England in a state of constant flux. Here are just some of the most threatening and consequential revolts that kept the Tudors on their toes.

The Simnel Rebellion

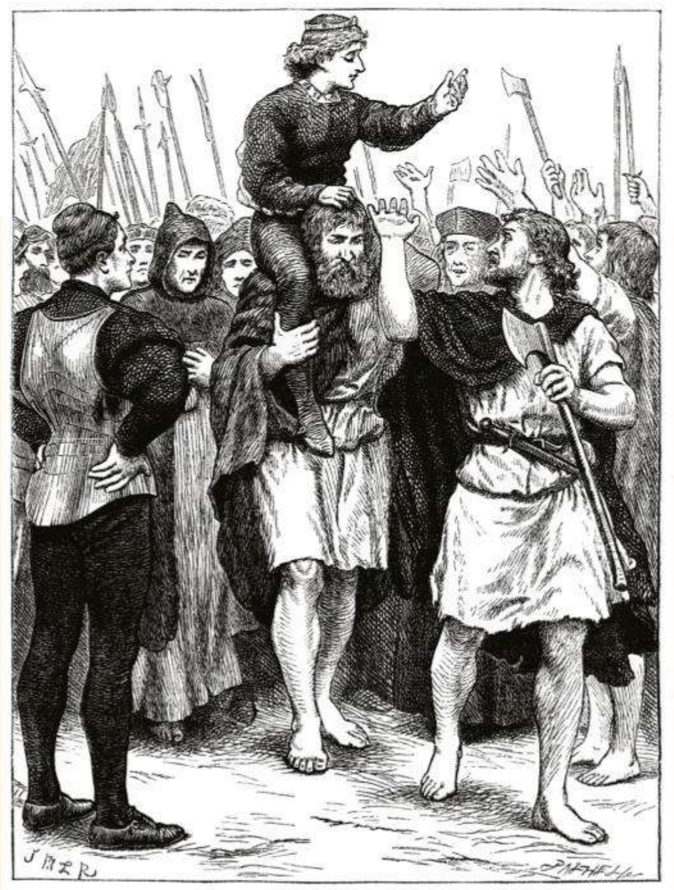
HENRY VII'S THRONE IS CHALLENGED BY A PRETENDER

JANUARY 1487 – JUNE 1487

When Henry Tudor won the final battle if the Wars of the Roses against the Lancastrians in 1485, it was always going to be a momentous task to consolidate his throne as the first Tudor king. His first major opposition came just two years after his victory at Bosworth, when a young boy claiming to be Edward, Earl of Warwick began to garner support in Ireland. The boy's name is now believed to have been Lambert Simnel, though his identity has never been confirmed.

He was educated by the priest Richard Symonds who, seeing a resemblance between the young Simnel and the children of the late Plantagenet King Edward IV, hatched a plan to place the boy on the English throne as the rightful Lancastrian heir. But, upon hearing a rumour in 1487 that the Earl of Warwick (the nephew of both Edward IV and Richard III) had died in the Tower of London, Symonds changed his plan and began passing off Simnel as Warwick. Managing to convince enough people in Ireland, Simnel was crowned as King Edward VI in Dublin on 24 May 1487. Unfortunately for Simnel, Warwick was still very much alive.

Despite the actual Warwick's existence, Simnel's rebellion gained some high profile supporters in Margaret of Burgundy, who paid 2,000 German mercenaries to fight for the cause; John de la Pole, the Earl of Lincoln and another nephew of Richard III; and Gerald Fitzgerald, the Earl of Kildare and Lord Deputy of Ireland. In June 1487, the rebel army landed in England and fought Tudor forces at the Battle of Stoke. The rebellion was defeated, with de la Pole killed on the battlefield. Simnel and Symonds were captured, with little known about what happened to the priest afterwards. For many of the rebels, Henry VII showed mercy and restraint in their punishment, particularly for poor Simnel who the King recognised was merely a child who had been abused by those who truly opposed Tudor rule. Simnel was given a job in the royal kitchens, where he worked for the rest of his life.



"For many of the rebels, Henry VII showed mercy and restraint in their punishment"

The Warbeck Rebellion

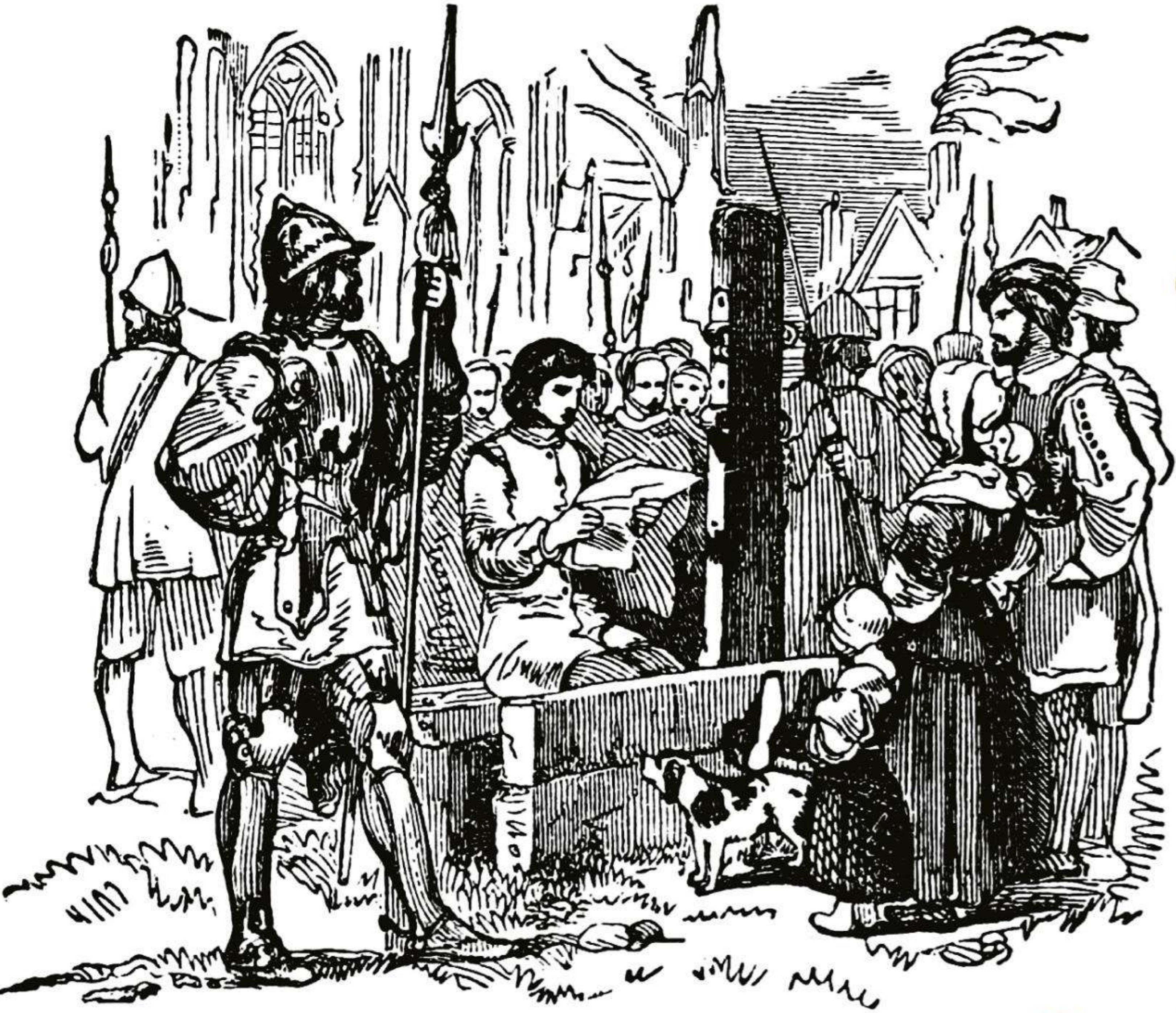
A PRETENDER GAINS SUPPORT IN EUROPE

NOVEMBER 1491 – OCTOBER 1497

In 1491, a young man started to make waves in Europe when he claimed that he was Richard, Duke of York, the son of Edward IV, who had disappeared from the Tower of London. His real name, however, was Perkin Warbeck from Flanders (modern day Belgium). After travelling to Cork, Ireland for work in November 1491, and finding acceptance as the Duke of York, he started to be welcomed by European royalty who believed him to be the true heir to the English throne. Over the next few years, he was received and recognised by King Charles VIII of France, Margaret of Burgundy, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and James IV of Scotland, the latter of whom even married Warbeck to his cousin, Lady Catherine Gordon.

Relations between England and Scotland were tense during this period, and the presence of Warbeck at the Scottish court did little to calm tensions. Henry VII threatened war if the Scots did not turn over the pretender. They did not comply but Warbeck, who had briefly attempted to face Henry's forces in 1495, took himself to England and landed in Cornwall in 1497. Garnering support from Cornish rebels, he swiftly amassed an army, before quickly losing his nerve and deserting his forces. He was subsequently captured by Henry's men in Hampshire.

Unfortunately for Warbeck, he was not shown the same mercy that Henry VII had displayed when dealing with Lambert Simnel. Perhaps because Warbeck had personally stirred rebellion, or perhaps because Henry viewed him as a more substantial threat than Simnel, Henry had Warbeck hanged at Tyburn on 23 November 1499.



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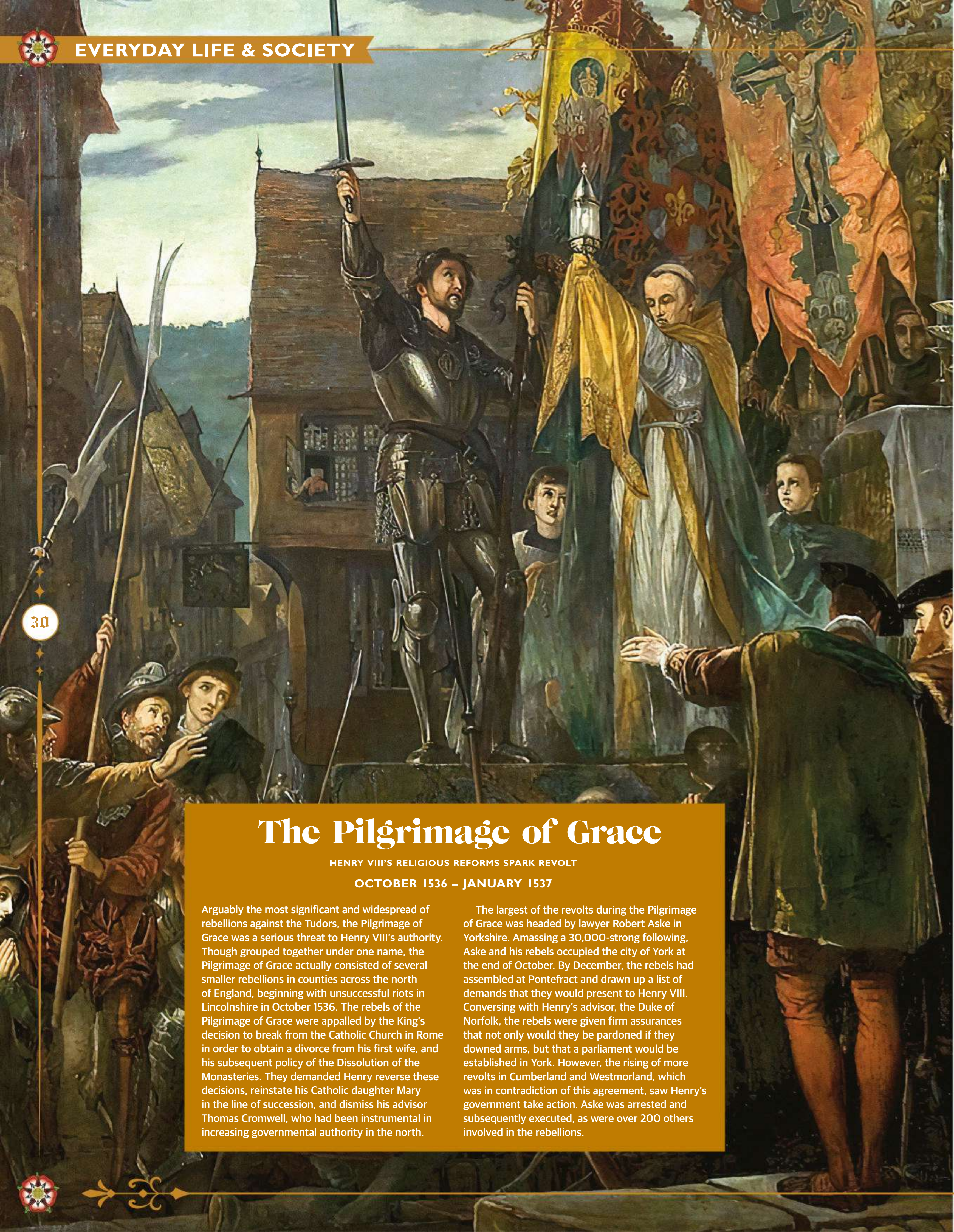


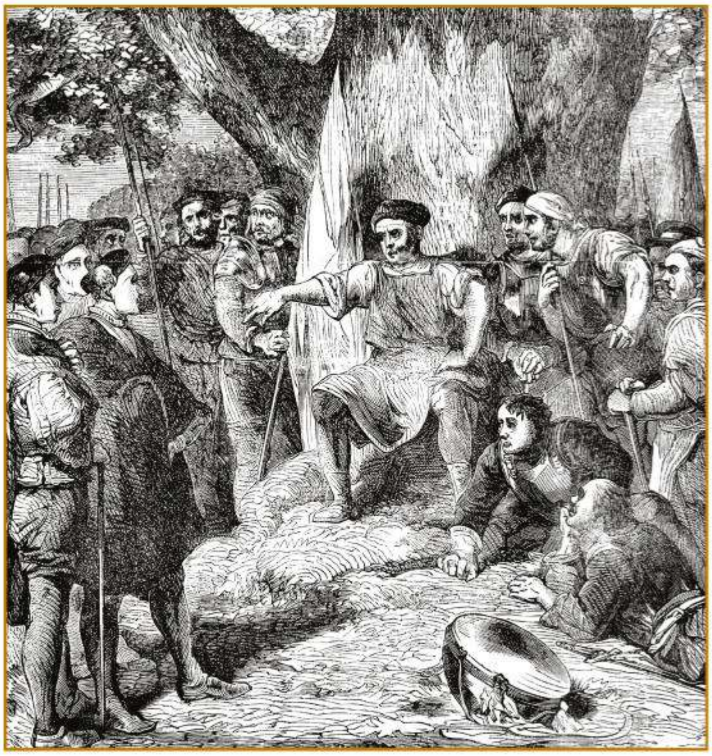
The Pilgrimage of Grace

HENRY VIII'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS SPARK REVOLT

OCTOBER 1536 – JANUARY 1537

Arguably the most significant and widespread of rebellions against the Tudors, the Pilgrimage of Grace was a serious threat to Henry VIII's authority. Though grouped together under one name, the Pilgrimage of Grace actually consisted of several smaller rebellions in counties across the north of England, beginning with unsuccessful riots in Lincolnshire in October 1536. The rebels of the Pilgrimage of Grace were appalled by the King's decision to break from the Catholic Church in Rome in order to obtain a divorce from his first wife, and his subsequent policy of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. They demanded Henry reverse these decisions, reinstate his Catholic daughter Mary in the line of succession, and dismiss his advisor Thomas Cromwell, who had been instrumental in increasing governmental authority in the north.

The largest of the revolts during the Pilgrimage of Grace was headed by lawyer Robert Aske in Yorkshire. Amassing a 30,000-strong following, Aske and his rebels occupied the city of York at the end of October. By December, the rebels had assembled at Pontefract and drawn up a list of demands that they would present to Henry VIII. Conversing with Henry's advisor, the Duke of Norfolk, the rebels were given firm assurances that not only would they be pardoned if they downed arms, but that a parliament would be established in York. However, the rising of more revolts in Cumberland and Westmorland, which was in contradiction of this agreement, saw Henry's government take action. Aske was arrested and subsequently executed, as were over 200 others involved in the rebellions.



Kett's Rebellion

THE POOR FIGHT BACK AGAINST ENCLOSURE

JULY 1549 – AUGUST 1549

In 1549, King Edward VI's enclosure policies had started to prove unpopular with the people of Norfolk. Enforced by the Duke of Somerset, the Lord Protector of England, who had been appointed to rule alongside the nine-year-old king upon his succession, the policies dictated the fencing off of common land, which would then be controlled by private landlords. For the poorer people of Tudor England who had farmed these lands for centuries, this was nothing short of a catastrophic blow. In Wymondham, Norfolk on 8 July 1549, rebels fought back against the policy, and began to tear down the fences that had been erected to enclose land in their area. Robert Kett, a local landowner, admitted he should not have put up the fences and offered to lead the rebels in their fight.

Marching 16 kilometres (ten miles) from Wymondham to Mousehold Heath just outside of Norwich, Kett gathered between 15,000 and 16,000 followers. The rebel army attempted to take the city of Norwich on 21 July but failed. The following day, they tried again and this time were successful in gaining control of England's second-largest city. Holding the city for a number of days, Kett and the rebels defeated an army led by the Marquess of Northampton, but were pushed out of the city by forces under the Earl of Warwick towards the end of August.

On 27 August, a battle at Dussindale stopped the rebellion, with thousands of rebels killed and Kett arrested. Kett was found guilty of treason and on 7 December 1549, was hanged from the walls of Norwich Castle.

Wyatt's Rebellion

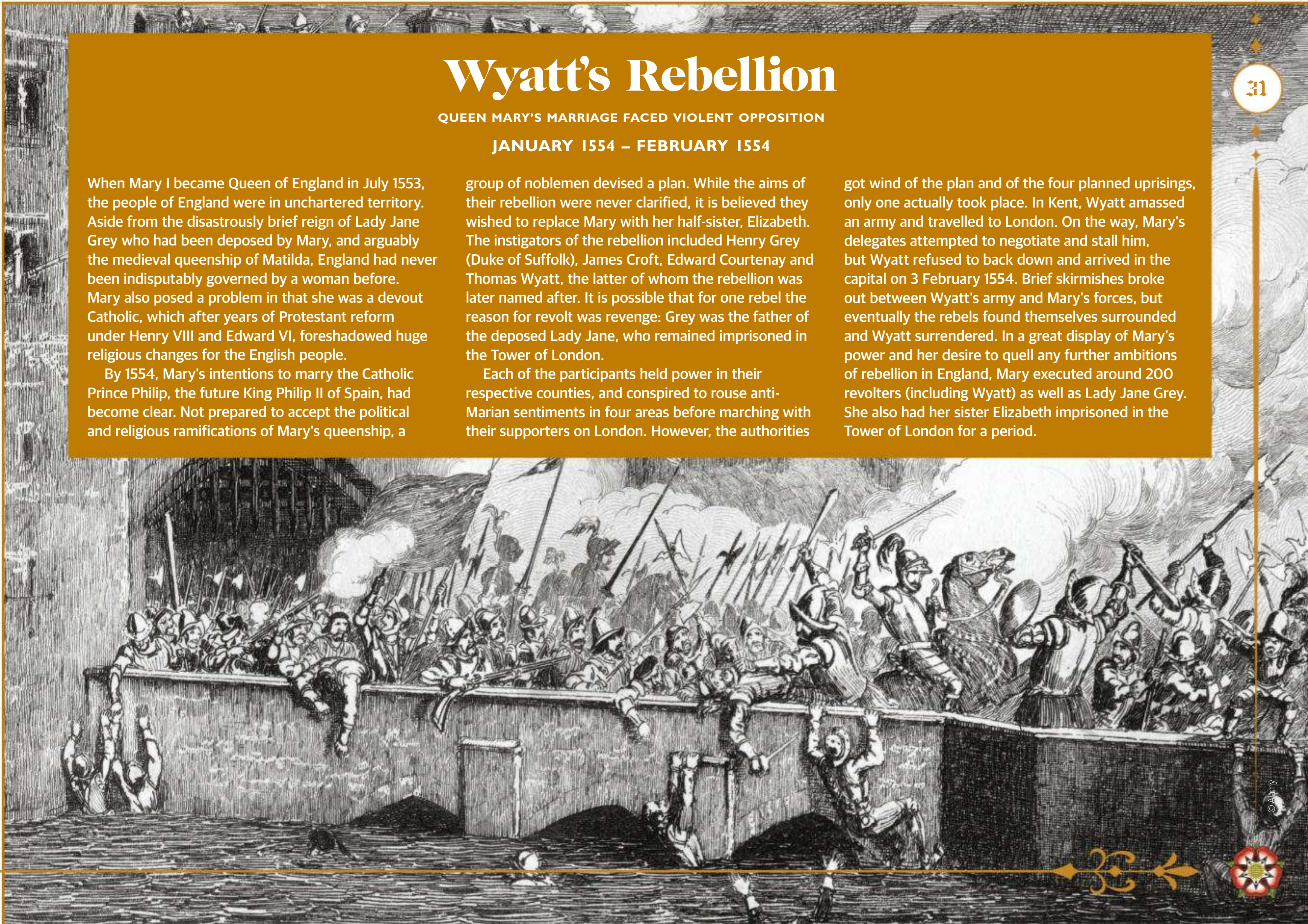
QUEEN MARY'S MARRIAGE FACED VIOLENT OPPOSITION

JANUARY 1554 – FEBRUARY 1554

When Mary I became Queen of England in July 1553, the people of England were in unchartered territory. Aside from the disastrously brief reign of Lady Jane Grey who had been deposed by Mary, and arguably the medieval queenship of Matilda, England had never been indisputably governed by a woman before. Mary also posed a problem in that she was a devout Catholic, which after years of Protestant reform under Henry VIII and Edward VI, foreshadowed huge religious changes for the English people.

By 1554, Mary's intentions to marry the Catholic Prince Philip, the future King Philip II of Spain, had become clear. Not prepared to accept the political and religious ramifications of Mary's queenship, a group of noblemen devised a plan. While the aims of their rebellion were never clarified, it is believed they wished to replace Mary with her half-sister, Elizabeth. The instigators of the rebellion included Henry Grey (Duke of Suffolk), James Croft, Edward Courtenay and Thomas Wyatt, the latter of whom the rebellion was later named after. It is possible that for one rebel the reason for revolt was revenge: Grey was the father of the deposed Lady Jane, who remained imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Each of the participants held power in their respective counties, and conspired to rouse anti-Marian sentiments in four areas before marching with their supporters on London. However, the authorities got wind of the plan and of the four planned uprisings, only one actually took place. In Kent, Wyatt amassed an army and travelled to London. On the way, Mary's delegates attempted to negotiate and stall him, but Wyatt refused to back down and arrived in the capital on 3 February 1554. Brief skirmishes broke out between Wyatt's army and Mary's forces, but eventually the rebels found themselves surrounded and Wyatt surrendered. In a great display of Mary's power and her desire to quell any further ambitions of rebellion in England, Mary executed around 200 revolters (including Wyatt) as well as Lady Jane Grey. She also had her sister Elizabeth imprisoned in the Tower of London for a period.



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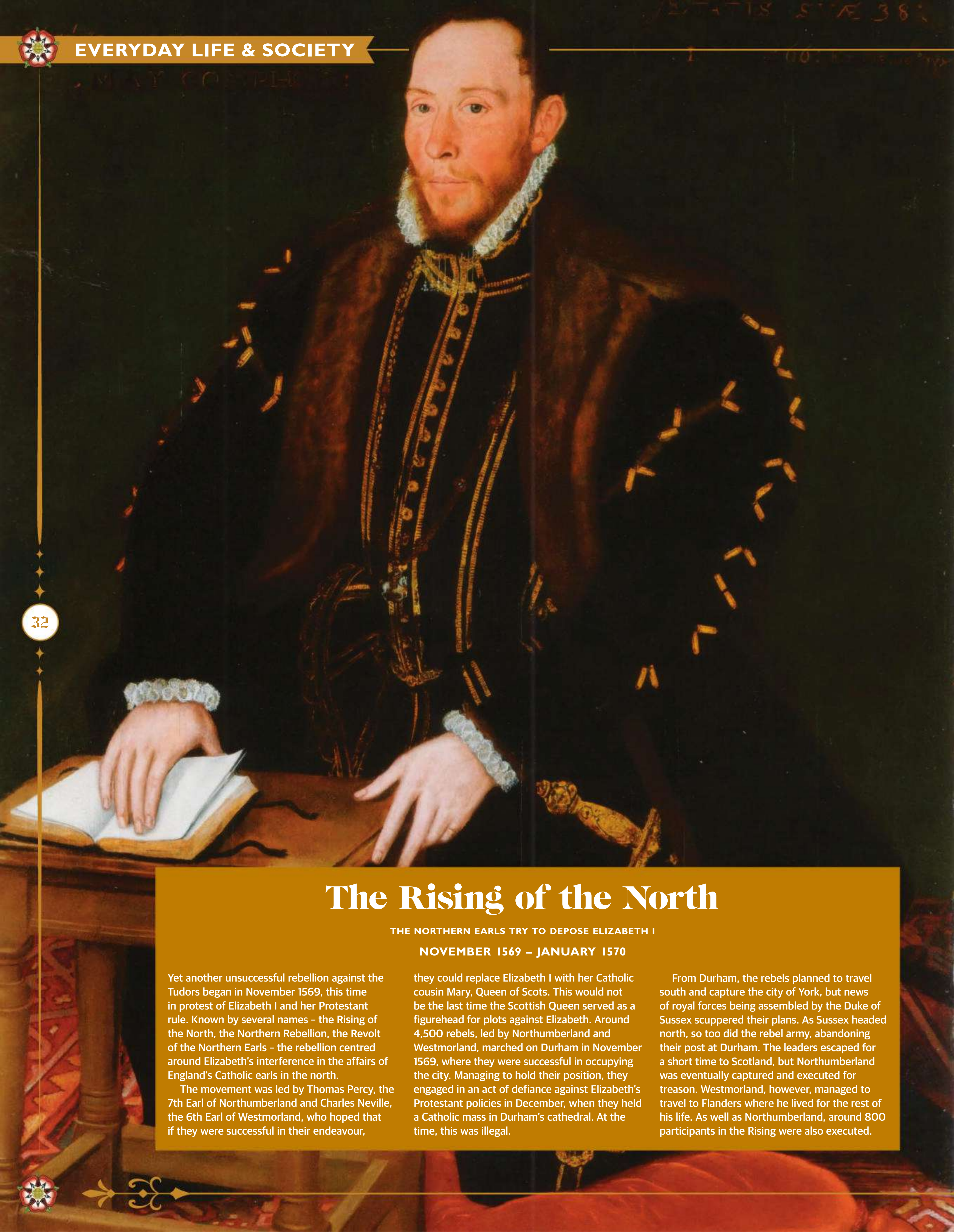


The Rising of the North

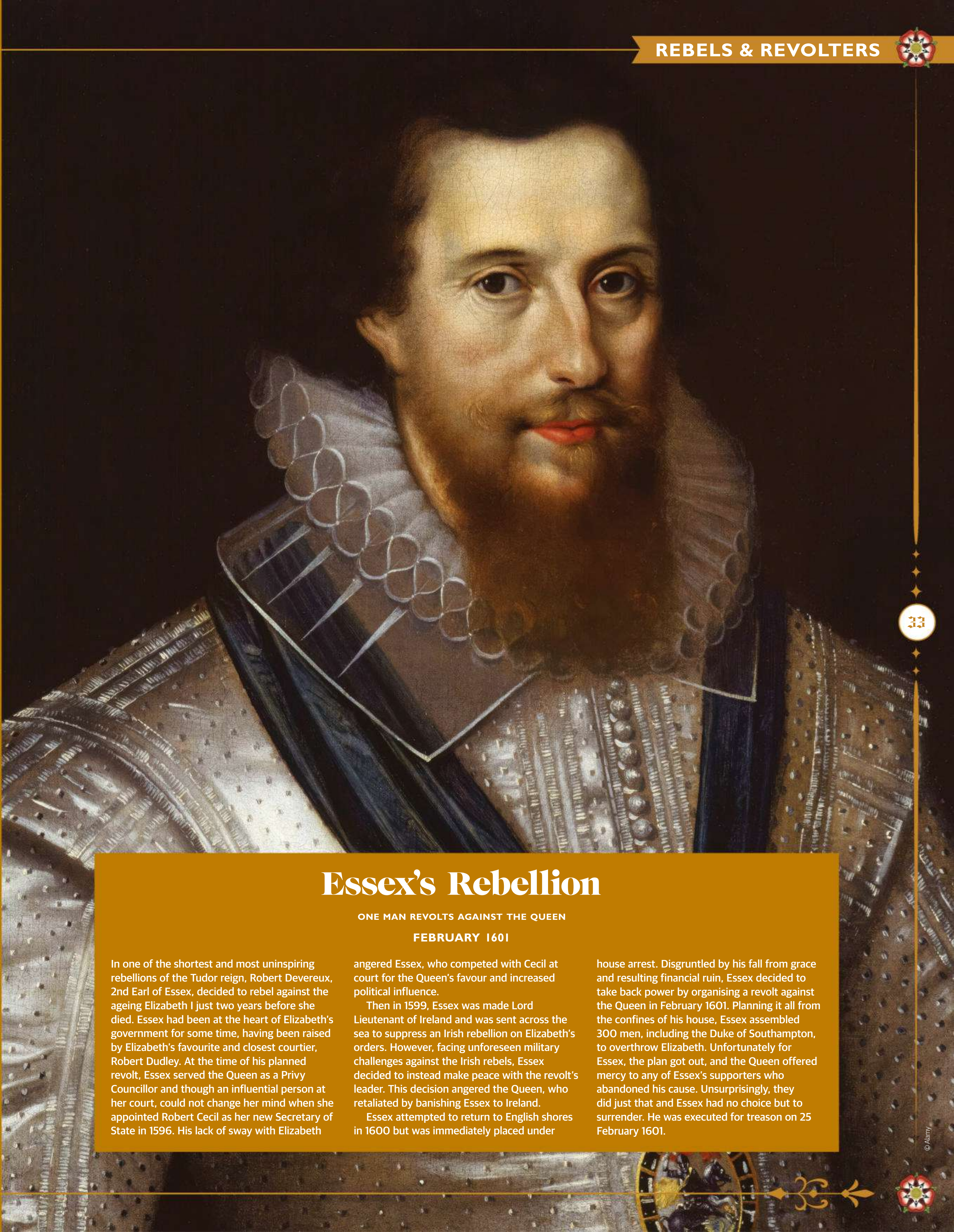
THE NORTHERN EARLS TRY TO DEPOSE ELIZABETH I

NOVEMBER 1569 – JANUARY 1570

Yet another unsuccessful rebellion against the Tudors began in November 1569, this time in protest of Elizabeth I and her Protestant rule. Known by several names – the Rising of the North, the Northern Rebellion, the Revolt of the Northern Earls – the rebellion centred around Elizabeth's interference in the affairs of England's Catholic earls in the north.

The movement was led by Thomas Percy, the 7th Earl of Northumberland and Charles Neville, the 6th Earl of Westmorland, who hoped that if they were successful in their endeavour, they could replace Elizabeth I with her Catholic cousin Mary, Queen of Scots. This would not be the last time the Scottish Queen served as a figurehead for plots against Elizabeth. Around 4,500 rebels, led by Northumberland and Westmorland, marched on Durham in November 1569, where they were successful in occupying the city. Managing to hold their position, they engaged in an act of defiance against Elizabeth's Protestant policies in December, when they held a Catholic mass in Durham's cathedral. At the time, this was illegal.

From Durham, the rebels planned to travel south and capture the city of York, but news of royal forces being assembled by the Duke of Sussex scuppered their plans. As Sussex headed north, so too did the rebel army, abandoning their post at Durham. The leaders escaped for a short time to Scotland, but Northumberland was eventually captured and executed for treason. Westmorland, however, managed to travel to Flanders where he lived for the rest of his life. As well as Northumberland, around 800 participants in the Rising were also executed.



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Essex's Rebellion

ONE MAN REVOLTS AGAINST THE QUEEN

FEBRUARY 1601

In one of the shortest and most uninspiring rebellions of the Tudor reign, Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, decided to rebel against the ageing Elizabeth I just two years before she died. Essex had been at the heart of Elizabeth's government for some time, having been raised by Elizabeth's favourite and closest courtier, Robert Dudley. At the time of his planned revolt, Essex served the Queen as a Privy Councillor and though an influential person at her court, could not change her mind when she appointed Robert Cecil as her new Secretary of State in 1596. His lack of sway with Elizabeth angered Essex, who competed with Cecil at court for the Queen's favour and increased political influence.

Then in 1599, Essex was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and was sent across the sea to suppress an Irish rebellion on Elizabeth's orders. However, facing unforeseen military challenges against the Irish rebels, Essex decided to instead make peace with the revolt's leader. This decision angered the Queen, who retaliated by banishing Essex to Ireland.

Essex attempted to return to English shores in 1600 but was immediately placed under house arrest. Disgruntled by his fall from grace and resulting financial ruin, Essex decided to take back power by organising a revolt against the Queen in February 1601. Planning it all from the confines of his house, Essex assembled 300 men, including the Duke of Southampton, to overthrow Elizabeth. Unfortunately for Essex, the plan got out, and the Queen offered mercy to any of Essex's supporters who abandoned his cause. Unsurprisingly, they did just that and Essex had no choice but to surrender. He was executed for treason on 25 February 1601.

FOR QUEEN, COUNTRY… AND COIN

TUDOR PIRATES

Discover the gentlemen thieves who terrorised the high seas on Elizabeth's orders

WRITTEN BY MATHEW LYONS

On 7 September 1592, the Madre de Dios was brought into the harbour at Dartmouth. Seven decks high and weighing some 1,600 tons, it was the largest ship England had ever seen. It was also the most treasure-filled. Its hold was packed with luxury goods: silk, damask, taffeta, calico; carpets, quilts, canopies; pepper, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon; frankincense, camphor; ivory, ebony, and items of porcelain.

The Madre de Dios belonged to Portugal, a Spanish dominion since 1580. It was bringing merchandise back from the East Indies. Early on the morning of 3 August, to the west of the Azores, it had been spotted by a fleet of some seven English ships, most dispatched for just such a purpose by Sir Walter Raleigh. By 10am, the English were close enough to open fire. The fight was long and brutal, lasting through nightfall until around 2am.

When it was over, there was no time to waste. The English boarded their prize in darkness. On deck they found carnage. "So many bodies slain and dismembered… miserable people, whose limbs were so torn with the

Illustration by: Kevin McGivern

violence of shot," one report runs. "No man could almost step but upon a dead carcass or a bloody floor."

But English seamen swarmed through the ship, candles in hand, ransacking it cabin by cabin. The surviving Portuguese huddled in dark corners, crying *misericórdia* - mercy, mercy - surrendering again and again to whatever Englishmen they met. By the time Sir John Burgh came aboard, some time after daybreak, to claim the ship for Elizabeth I, its cabins had largely been stripped bare.

> *"The largest piece of jewellery - alone worth some £125,000 – was never traced"*

EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

How much was it all worth? The Portuguese were said to value the ship's cargo at four million ducats - around a million pounds at the time. There were rumours in the Azores that there were precious stones worth another million on board. But when all the goods were finally tallied back up in London, they were only valued at £141,000. A fortune, but some way short of a million.

What had happened to all those precious stones? No-one quite knows. But the general sense is clear enough: as one investor in the fleet said, it was all down to "the thievery of these lewd fellows". The largest piece of jewellery - a great diamond pectoral cross - was alone worth some £125,000. It was never traced. Agents from London's jewellers were waiting for the ship when it docked. One merchant named Bradbent bought 1,800 diamonds and over 500 rubies.

Elizabeth I, who had a ten per cent stake in the syndicate behind the voyage, rewarded herself half of the ship's value. She took it in the form of pepper, its most plentiful commodity. There were, in fact, some 3,652 bags of it - too much for a single trader to buy. Another syndicate was formed, which bought the pepper for a little over £80,000. The queen had to issue a warrant prohibiting the import of pepper for at least a year to help it recover its money.

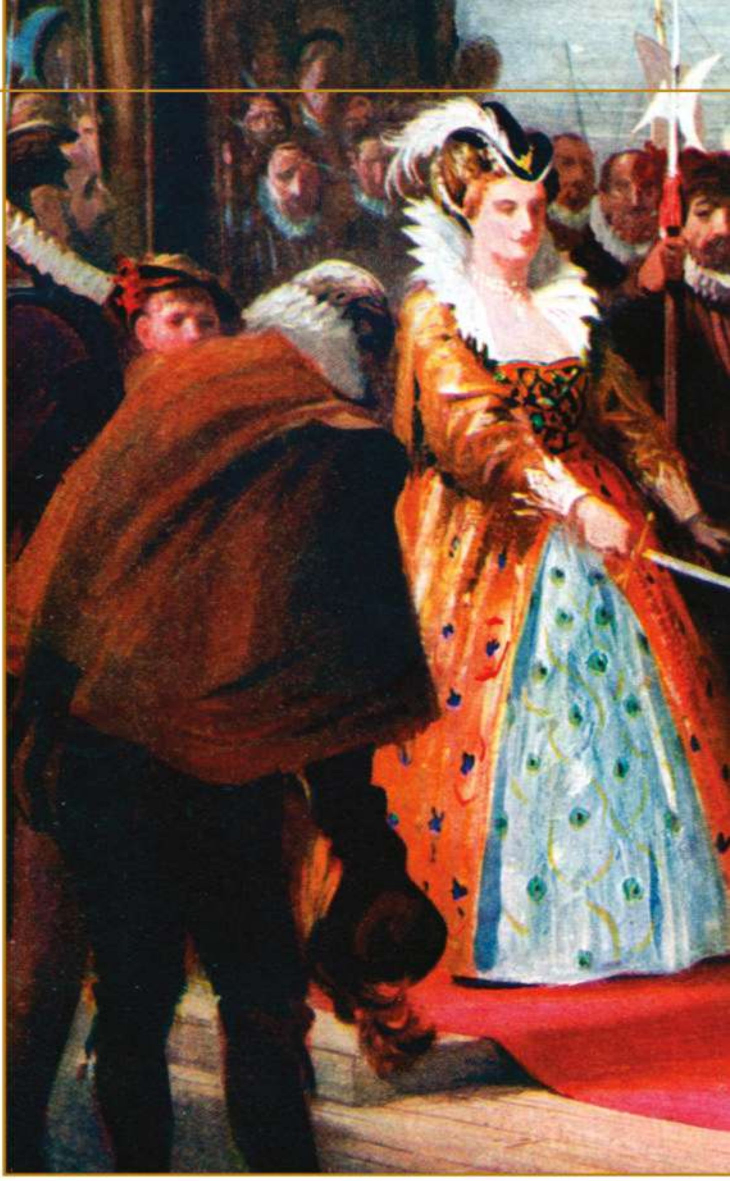
But why was the Queen of England supporting piracy?

RETRIBUTION AND JUST REWARD

Strictly speaking, voyages like those that seized the Madre de Dios weren't piracy at all. They operated under letters of reprisal, also known as letters of marque, a widely accepted form of retributive justice that dated back to the Rôles d'Oléron, an international maritime law from the 12th century. If a merchant's goods were seized in a foreign country, he could apply for a letter of reprisal through the Court of Admiralty, which allowed him in return to seize money or goods from that country up to the value claimed. The system was certainly abused and often ignored; but there *was* a system.

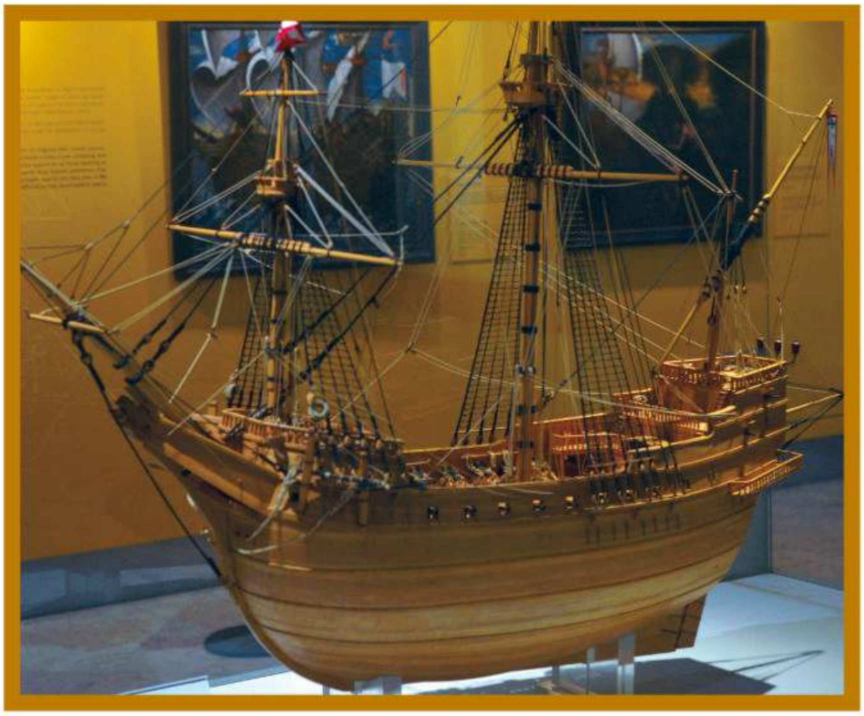
Which is to say, there was a line. But the line moved - and men jumped back and forth across it. Pirates were hunted down and hanged throughout Elizabeth's reign. But pirates were also regularly employed on state business. This English ambivalence about piracy wasn't something that developed from fear of imperial Spain; it is there right from the moment Elizabeth ascended the throne.

Henry Strangways - Dorset-born but typically operating out of Ireland since the late 1540s - captured some Portuguese ships from Antwerp in early 1559. By August he was in the Tower of London awaiting execution. Time passed. Nicholas Throckmorton, the English ambassador to Catholic France, lobbied on his behalf. By October 1562, Strangways was on his way from Portsmouth to Le Havre in command of a galley and 80 men to fight alongside England's Huguenot allies. Naturally, this ambivalence - this sense of a movable line



ABOVE Francis Drake was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I aboard the Golden Hind after circumnavigating the globe

RIGHT Pirates were violent men, but more died at sea from disease and infection than died in combat



LEFT A model of Portuguese ship the Madre de Dios, which was captured and plundered by English ships

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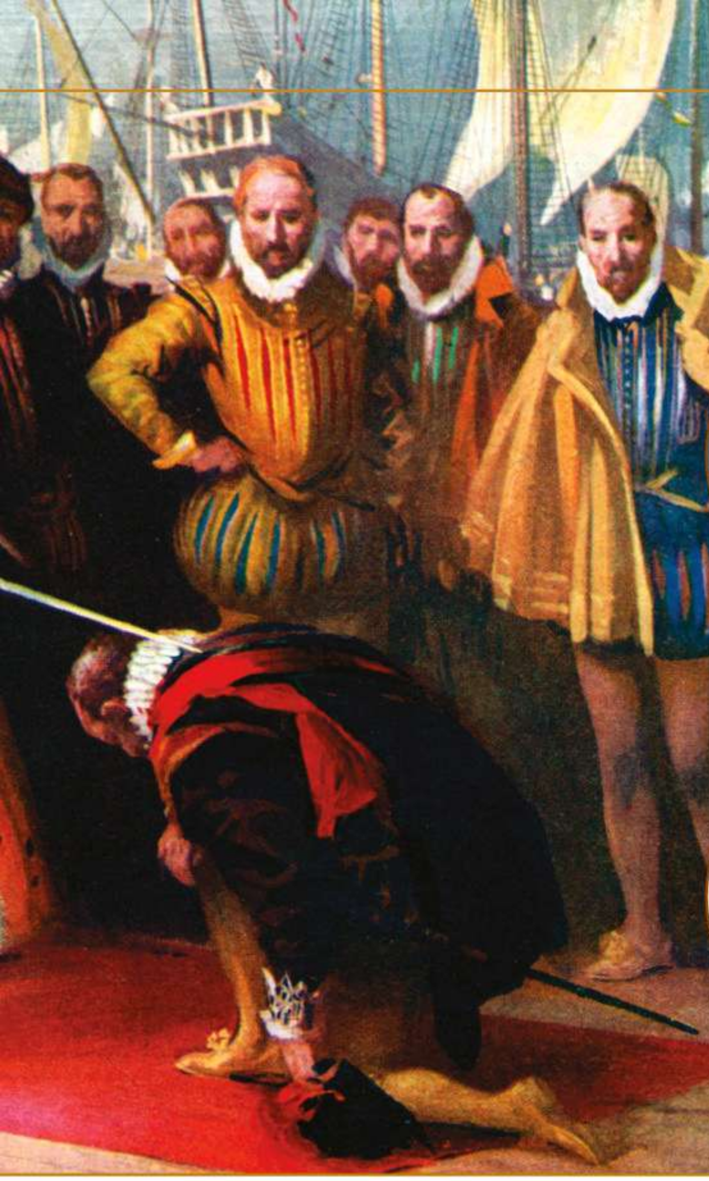
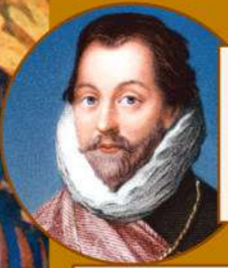
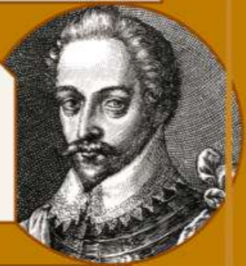


Elizabeth's Sea Dogs

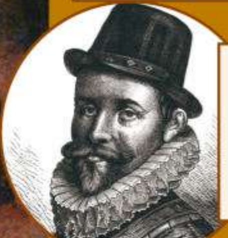
THE MEN WHO CONQUERED THE SEAS FOR THEIR QUEEN



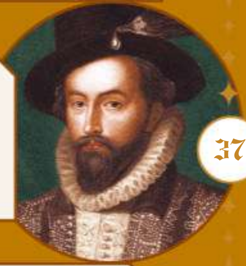
Francis Drake *c.1540-1543 – 1596*
One of the most famous of the Tudor era's seafaring gentlemen, Drake was raised by the Hawkins family, well-known merchants and privateers. Drake would go on to circumnavigate the globe between 1577 and 1580 alongside trips to the West Indies.



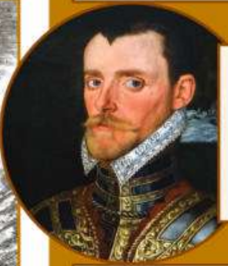
Humphrey Gilbert *c.1539 – 1583*
Having studied navigation and military science at Oxford, Gilbert became a celebrated seaman and annexed Newfoundland. He was commissioned by Elizabeth I to put down rebellion in Ireland and tried, but was unable, to establish a colony in North America.



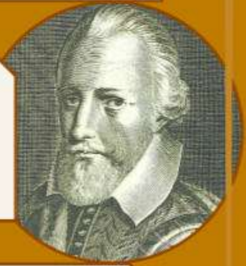
John Hawkins *1532 – 1595*
Credited as the architect of the Elizabethan navy, Hawkins was also the first English slave trader. He was appointed treasurer of the navy, where he commissioned the new, faster ships that withstood the Spanish Armada.



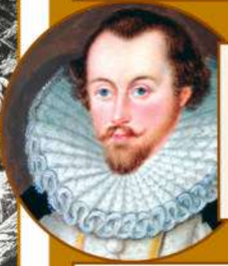
Walter Raleigh *c.1554 – 1618*
Raleigh went from a knight under Elizabeth to being accused of treason under James I, dying in the Tower of London. With a lust for adventure and spending money, he had set out in search for El Dorado, among other expeditions of his famous seafaring life.



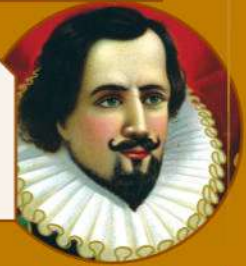
Richard Hawkins *c.1560 – 1622*
Son of John Hawkins, Richard first set sail with his uncle in 1582 and was commanding a ship under Drake by 1585. He was a captain during the Spanish Armada campaign. He wrote a book on his experiences, *Observations In His Voyage Into The South Sea*.



Richard Grenville *1542 – 1591*
As well as being involved in a number of military campaigns, Grenville is best remembered as the commander of the fleet that took 100 colonists to Roanoke Island in 1585 and ramming his ship, the Revenge, into Spanish ships in 1591.



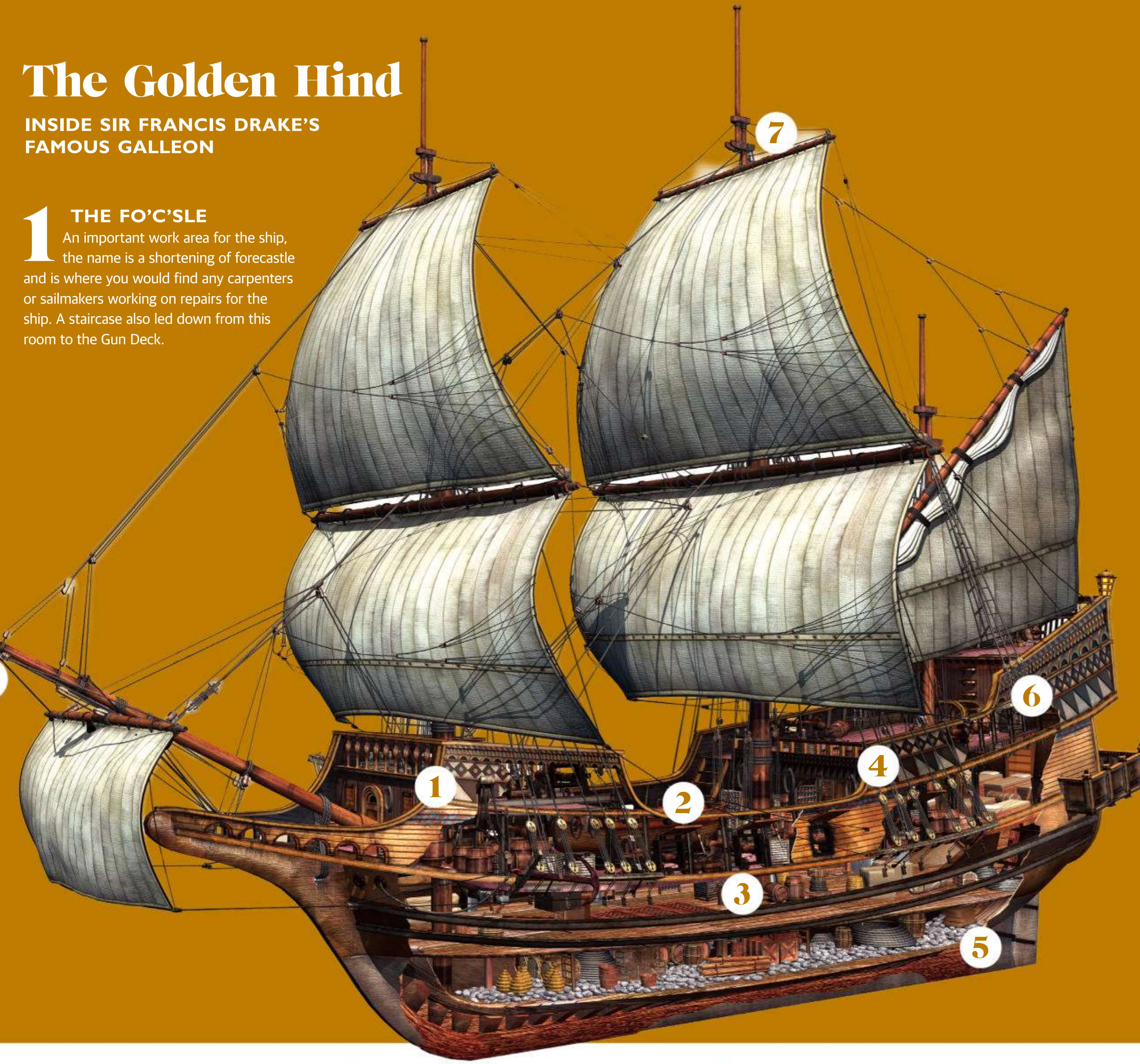
Martin Frobisher *c.1535 – 1594*
Frobisher began his sailing career working the coast of Guinea before privateering in the English Channel, raiding French ships. However, he went on to search for the Northwest Passage, leading to much exploration of what is now Canada's northeast coast.



John Davis *c.1550 – 1605*
Another sailor keen to find the Northwest Passage, Davis began his hunt in 1585 without success. He did seem to have good relations with the Inuit population of Greenland, however, and discovered the Falkland Islands in 1592.

The Golden Hind

INSIDE SIR FRANCIS DRAKE'S FAMOUS GALLEON



1 THE FO'C'SLE

An important work area for the ship, the name is a shortening of forecastle and is where you would find any carpenters or sailmakers working on repairs for the ship. A staircase also led down from this room to the Gun Deck.

2 GUN DECK

A notable feature of the Gun Deck was its low ceilings. This was to keep the weight of the ship's guns just above the water line, making the ship much more stable. The Hind had 14 Minion Guns with a range of 275 metres (300 yards).

3 HOLD

Much as its name suggests, this is where all goods on the ship were held, but also where prisoners went as the brig was located here too. An opening on the Main Deck led directly down to the hold for delivering treasure and supplies.

4 ARMOURY

An important part of the ship, this is where the small arms were kept to be handed out during battle and where the anchor would be raised from. The officers of the ship would sleep in this room to defend it and be ready for action.

5 BILGE

This section of the ship contained rocks and sand to add weight and balance to the craft below the water line. Drake had replaced some of the ballast with silver after raiding the Cacafuego and having no room left in the hold.

6 THE GREAT CABIN

More often than not, this is where you would find Drake communing with his officers. Here is where meals would be served and where recreational games with cards or dice might be enjoyed. Just behind it was Drake's personal cabin.

7 CROSS TREES AND FIGHTING TOP

The cross above the sail was a lookout post with sailors tying their legs to the mast for stability. Just below (behind the sail) was the Fighting Top, where archers and arquebusiers would be positioned during battle.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

– cascaded through the system. The mayor of Cork refused to act against pirates because the local economy needed their merchandise; in Cardiff, the magistrate Thomas Lewes habitually released on bail any pirates who were unlucky enough to get arrested. Across the country, vice-admirals, charged with suppressing piracy, turned a blind eye to it in return for cash.

INFESTED WATERS

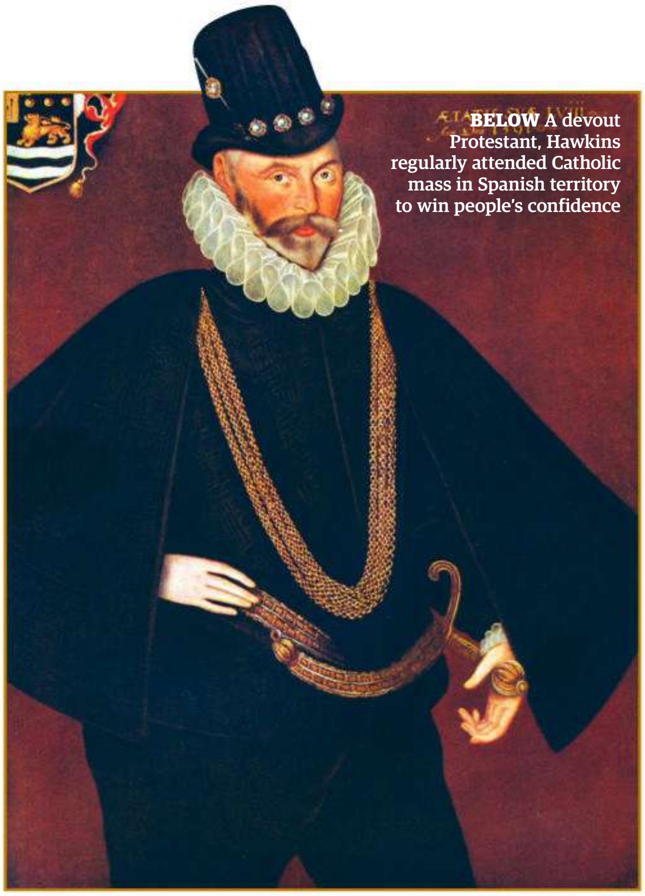
Piracy wasn't simply a problem for Spanish or other Catholic shipping. In 1577, Henry Hastings, the earl of Huntingdon and president of the Council of the North, complained of "the great disorders of pirates upon the coasts, which if not seen into, the merchants and fishermen will hardly be able to go forth". At the end of the following decade, Sir Francis Walsingham, the queen's spymaster, was informed that, "All the boroughs and towns in Scotland are inhabited by Protestants, but so wounded with infinite piracies… that they cry out that more than the third part of their goods is possessed by pirates of England."

But there is no question that the Spanish were a particular target. In August 1571, De Spes, the Spanish ambassador, complained that 14 Spanish ships fitted out "for the suppression of the pirates infesting the Channel" were fired at by the guns at Dover Castle, causing great injury. In 1582, his successor, Mendoza, bitterly noting the activities of a Bristol pirate named Roberts, off-loaded his frustrations to Walsingham. "I am much annoyed at having to be always troubling you about the robberies of pirates," he wrote. "In the four years I have been here, and in all the similar complaints I have made, it is never settled."

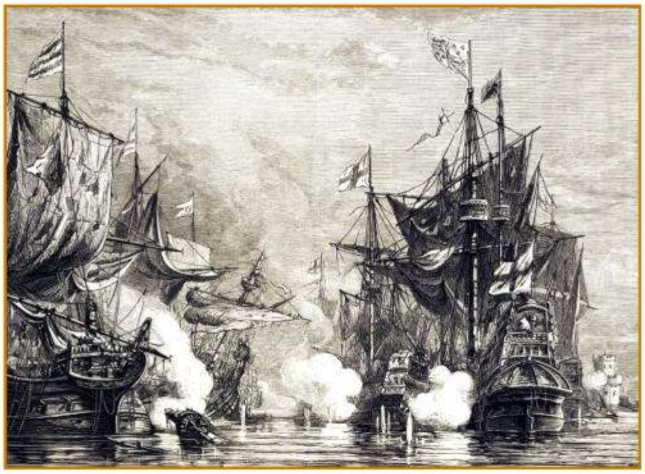
> *"On board the Minion, the men ate rats and made stews from ox hide"*

FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

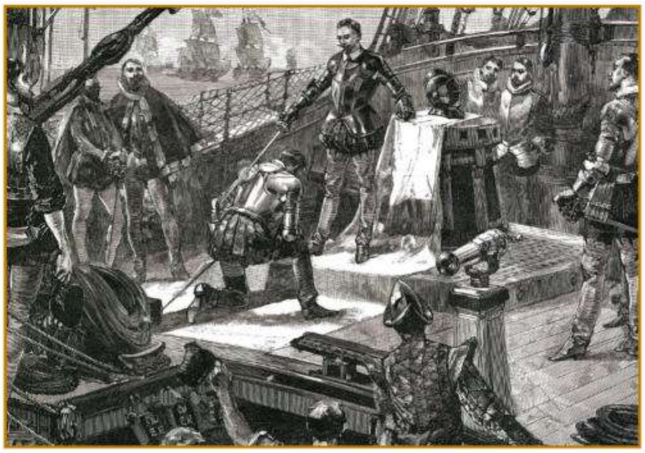
Tensions between the two nations dated back to the reign of Henry VIII. In 1543, Henry VIII aligned with Spain and declared war on France. English ships were licensed to seize enemy ships and merchandise. The English were none too discriminating in which foreign ships they targeted, and when Spain made peace with France they stopped discriminating at all.



BELOW A devout Protestant, Hawkins regularly attended Catholic mass in Spanish territory to win people's confidence



BELOW Hawkins lost several ships in the Battle of San Juan de Ulúa, including the 700-ton Jesus of Lubeck, which belonged to Elizabeth I



BOTTOM Lord Howard of Effingham, admiral of the English fleet, knights the victorious captains

By the 1560s, with the eruption of the French wars of religion and later the Dutch revolt, English ships were preying mercilessly on French Catholic and Spanish shipping from the Straits of Gibraltar through to the North Sea. They sailed under commissions from the likes of William of Orange or the Huguenot admiral Gaspard de Coligny. These seamen were certainly motivated by money; but patriotism played its part too. And then there was their Protestant faith.

John Hawkins led his men in daily prayers aboard ship. "Serve God daily, love one another, preserve your victuals, beware of fire and keep good company," he ordered his crew. And Richard Grenville spoke for many when he argued in 1574 that those parts of South America not actually occupied by Spain or Portugal – almost all of it, therefore – was "by God's providence left for England". But it was Hawkins who first pointed English ambition towards the Spanish Americas.

AN AMERICAN FUTURE

English merchants could trade on equal terms in Spain, thanks to a treaty negotiated by Henry VII. But the New World was different. All American trade was processed through Seville; ergo, any attempts to trade directly was in Spanish eyes *de facto* piracy. This was not new information: the English had traded in Spanish American goods through Seville since at least 1509.

Hawkins made two profitable but illegal voyages to the West Indies in 1562 and 1564, in both cases dealing in African slaves he had taken in Sierra Leone. The Spanish ambassador in London made Hawkins swear an oath not to enter Spanish-American waters again. But he did, of course and his third voyage, which sailed in October 1567, ran into trouble.

Hit by Caribbean storms in August the following year – the hull planking of one ship sprang "leaks so big as the thickness of a man's arm [and] living fish did swim upon the ballast as in the sea" – he took his fleet into San Juan de Ulúa, an island harbour in the Gulf of Mexico. Hawkins then seized the island.

Unfortunately for him, a Spanish fleet appeared on the horizon the following morning. A few days later, they attacked. Hawkins lost several ships and at least 90 men. Two ships survived: the Minion, under Hawkins, and the Judith, under a young Francis Drake.

Drake was ordered to come alongside the Minion to take on board some men. Instead, under cover of darkness, Drake sailed for home. "The Judith forsook us in our great misery," Hawkins said. Whatever he thought of the ethics of Drake's choice, Hawkins was faced with a practical problem. Drake had sailed off with all the food. On board the Minion, the men ate rats and parrots and made stews from ox hide. Around 15 survived the journey back.

FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY

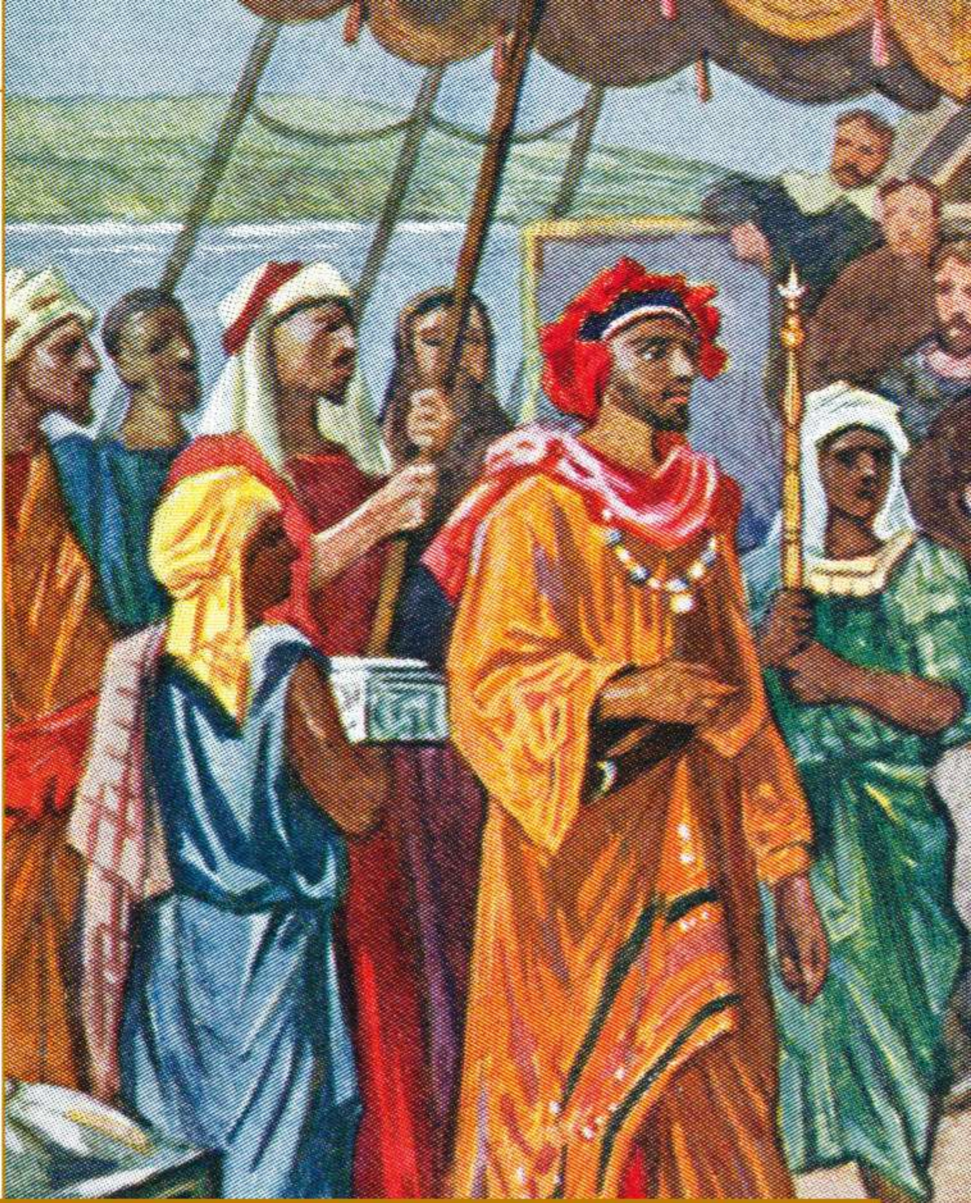
As relations between England and Spain deteriorated, so voyages of reprisal – and no doubt outright piracy – began in earnest. There were legitimate mercantile claims, but there was a political argument too. As Walter Raleigh later said, "it is [Spain's American] gold that endangereth and disturbeth all the nations of Europe". To seize Spanish treasure then, either at source or in transit, would alter the balance of power.

Enter Francis Drake again. He made two modest sallies into Spanish waters in central America in 1570 and 1571, attacking small shipping along the coastal inlets around Nombre de Dios in Panama, where the Spanish collected all their silver from the Americas – often brought overland on mule trains – before shipping it back annually to Spain. He sailed again in 1572. This time he partnered with some Huguenot corsairs and, more importantly, with two communities of escaped African slaves who had established themselves on the isthmus.

Together they attacked the mule train. The attack wasn't wholly successful; they had to leave much of the treasure behind. But Drake probably took some £20,000-worth back to England. He arrived in Plymouth in August 1573 a local hero; it is said the congregation of St Andrew's church rushed out in mid-sermon and swarmed down the hill to greet him. In Spain too his name was beginning to be noticed with foreboding.

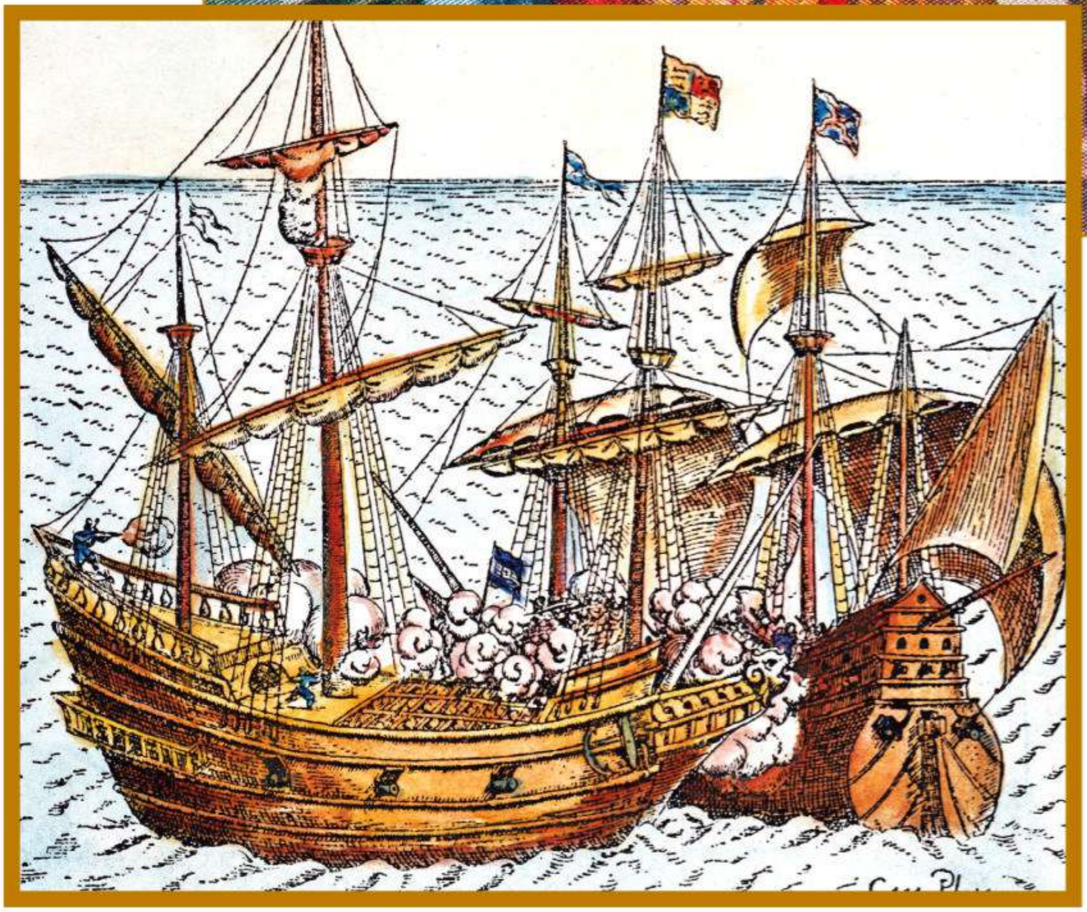
A WORLD WITHIN GRASP

In 1577, however, he set out on the global voyage that would cement his legend forever. But it was never Drake's intention to circumnavigate the world. The plan was to sail through the Strait of Magellan and plunder the western coast before returning home the same way. It was, in part, a commercial venture; one aim was to seek out peoples who might have gold and silver or spices to trade. It was also in part imperial, scouting for possible territory "not under the obedience of any Christian prince" where England might plant a colony. But it was also a voyage of reprisal, even if Drake never



RIGHT Drake's travels brought him before numerous foreign leaders

BELOW The Golden Hind capturing the Nuestra Señora de la Concepción off the coast of Peru in 1579



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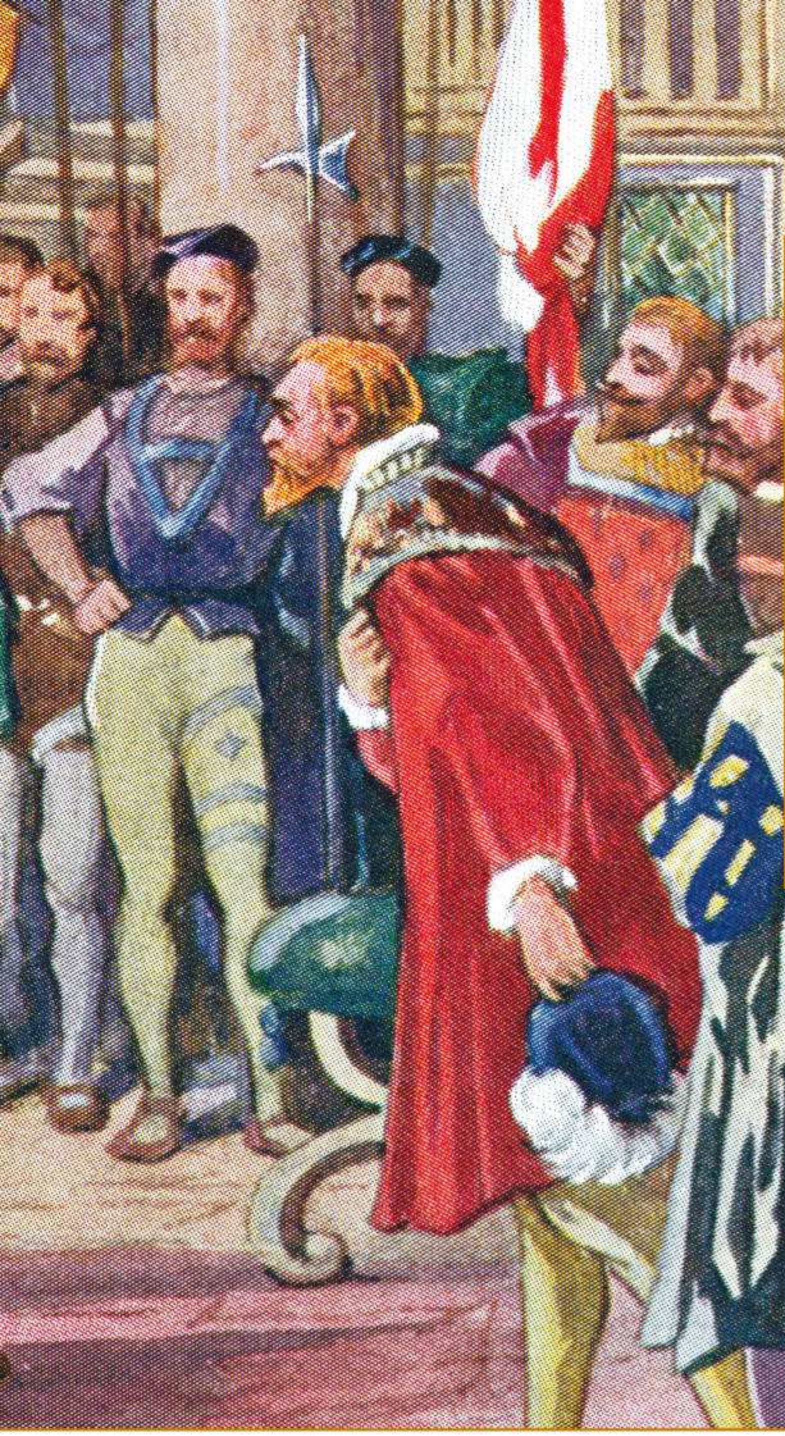
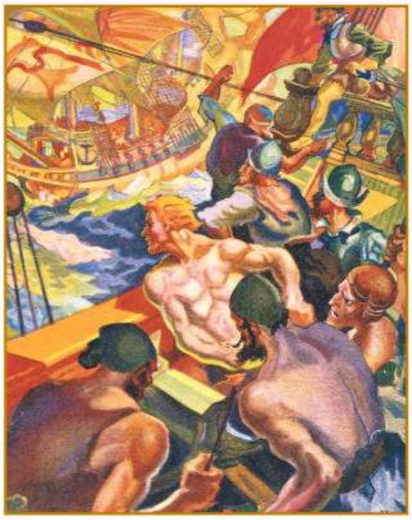


ABOVE Despite sacking three Spanish towns, Drake's 1585-6 raid on the West Indies failed to recoup on its investment

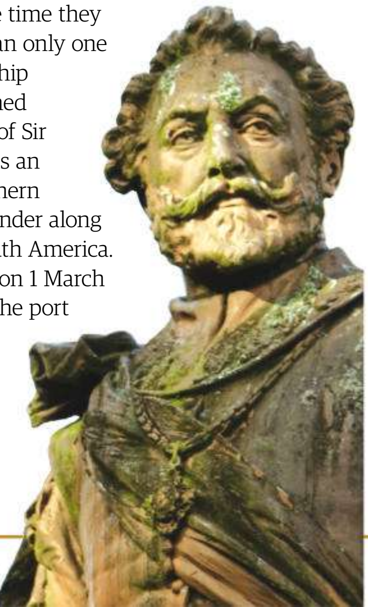


LEFT Privateers waisted no opportunities for plunder when they saw them

bothered with formalities like acquiring a letter from the Court of Admiralty. To deceive the Spanish, the voyage was publicly described as a trading venture to Alexandria.

Drake's fleet got under way at the end of 1577. However, by the time they reached the Strait of Magellan only one ship remained, Drake's flagship the Pelican, which he renamed the Golden Hind in honour of Sir Christopher Hatton, who was an investor. Rounding the southern coast of Chile he took to plunder along the western seaboard of South America. The largest prize was taken on 1 March 1579, in the seas off Callao, the port for Lima a few miles east. It was the Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, said to be nicknamed Cacafuego - shitfire - by the Spanish.

BELOW Francis Drake's success terrified the Spanish. They called him El Draque and imagined him as a dragon



"It is Spanish gold that endangereth and disturbeth all the nations of Europe"

It was evening when Drake pulled alongside the Cacafuego. There are different versions of what passed between him and the latter's master, San Juan de Antón, but one of them has Antón replying to Drake's demand to surrender by saying, "What old tub is that which orders me to strike sail?" The Golden Hind opened fire while its men leapt aboard. The battle was over before it had begun. The ship's cargo included silver bars, silver coins and gold, amounting to some £140,000 in value. "Our ship shall be called no more the *shitfire* but the *shitsilver*," its Spanish pilot reportedly said.

Drake sailed back into Plymouth on 26 September 1580. He wasn't a local hero, this time. He was a national hero. "His fame and name became admirable in all places," the historian John Stow wrote, "the people swarming daily in the streets to behold him, vowing hatred of all that durst mislike him."

DESPERATE TIMES

Many plans to exploit Drake's circumnavigation followed in its wake. But the problem was, as Drake himself discovered when he returned to the West Indies in 1585-6, there was a difference between projecting power through piracy and raiding, which England did well, and maintaining it, which England lacked the capacity to do.

Sea Dogs and slavery

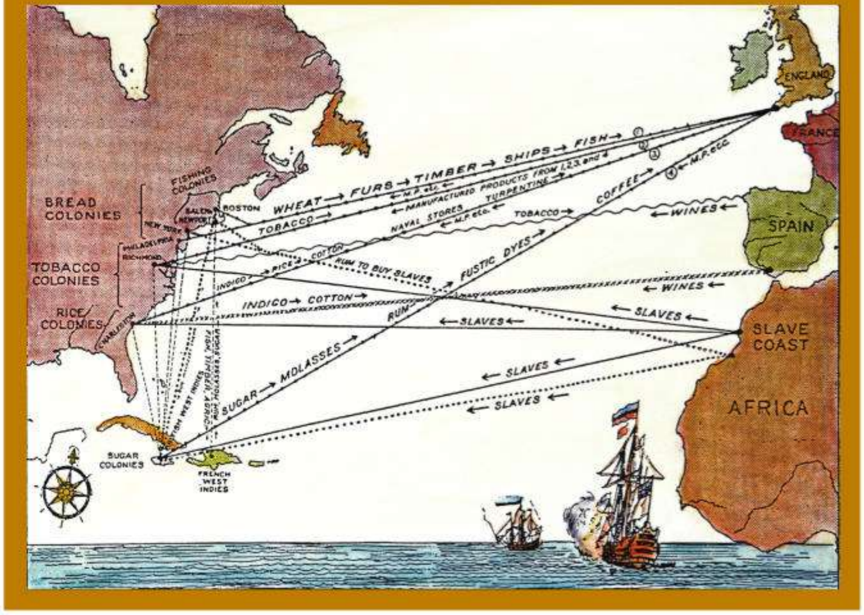
HOW THEIR PATHS WERE BLUEPRINT FOR TRIANGLE TRADE

While Elizabeth's Sea Dogs are largely remembered for their confrontations on the high sea, they also played a role in the establishment of the Triangular Slave Trade. Trade routes across the Atlantic had been well travelled, revealing consistent and reliable winds and currents (the Gulf Stream) that could take ships back and forth to the Americas from Europe. Using these winds, traders gathered raw materials from the colonies, shipped them to Europe for manufacture and then traded those for slaves in Africa, who were then sent to the colonies to extract more raw materials.

Among the first to participate in this trade from England was Sir John Hawkins with Queen Elizabeth leasing him a 700-ton ship for one of his journeys.

He and Francis Drake would capture African men and women and then sell them in the Caribbean and South America, looting enemy ships along the way. It's thought that in the five years Hawkins profited from this trade, he enslaved between 1,200 and 1,400 people. He was granted a special coat of arms by Elizabeth I, featuring a bound slave, for his efforts.

The resultant race for colonies, wealth and empire that followed was fuelled by this trading cycle and the establishment of the transatlantic slave trade that transported an estimated 10-12 million enslaved Africans.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SLAVE COAST
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FISHING COLONIES
BREAD COLONIES
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RICE COLONIES
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FRENCH WEST INDIES
BOSTON
SALEM
NEWPORT
NEW YORK
PHILADELPHIA
RICHMOND
CHARLESTON
WHEAT→ FURS→ TIMBER→ SHIPS→ FISH→
①
②
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④
←M.F. etc.
←MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS FROM 1,2,3 and 4
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TOBACCO→
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FISH, TIMBER, AFRICA
RUM, MOLASSES, SUGAR

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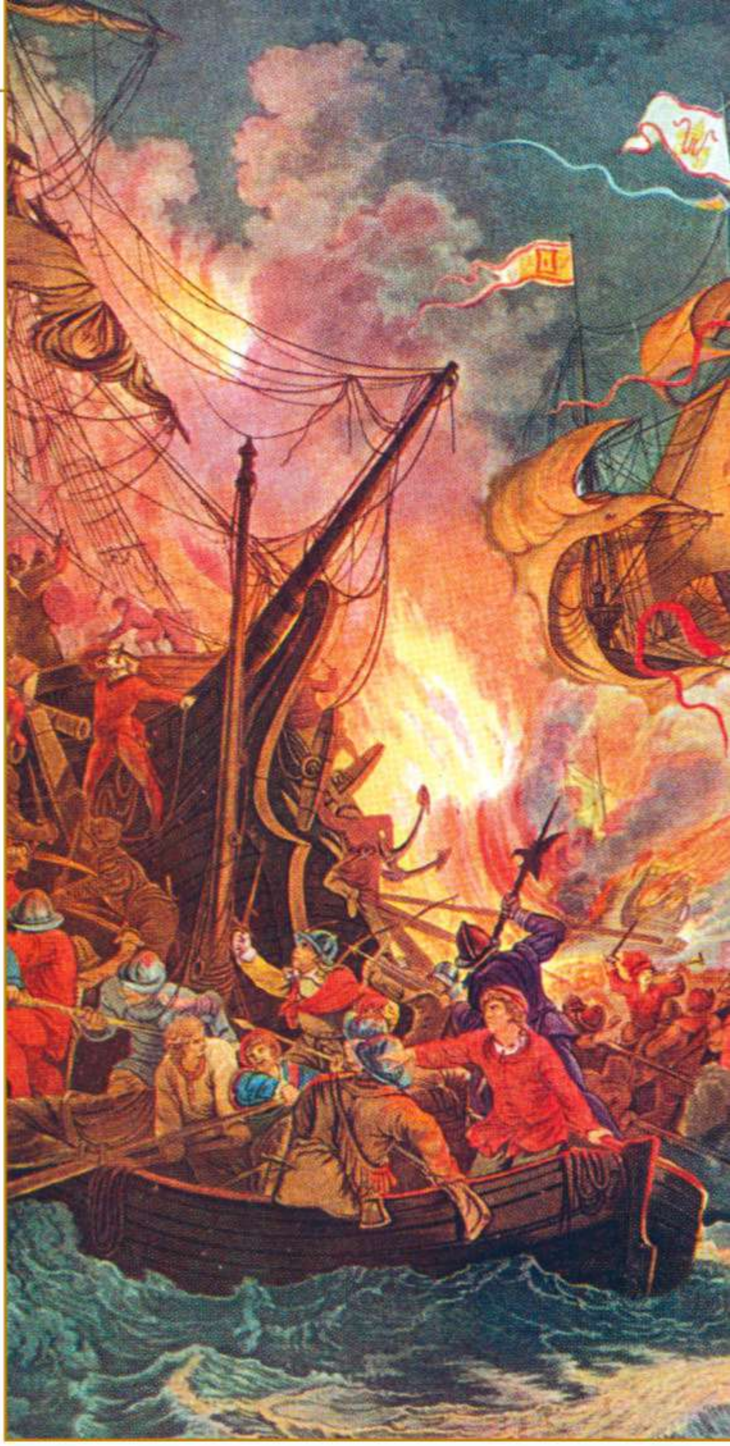


ABOVE The English naval fleet commanded by Lord Howard of Effingham and Sir Francis Drake defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 after a ferocious battle

Perhaps the nation's reliance on men like Drake spoke as much to desperation and vulnerability as anything else. Year after year, Elizabethan seamen patrolled the Atlantic hoping to capture the biggest prize: the Spanish treasure fleet. England's peril was surely imminent; perhaps its deliverance might be too. Drake's voyage of 1585-6 was something "whereupon dependeth the life and death of the cause", a despondent Walsingham wrote in July 1586, after a series of Spanish victories in the Low Countries. It did not, of course. But that it felt like it might to someone as clear-thinking as Walsingham is revealing.

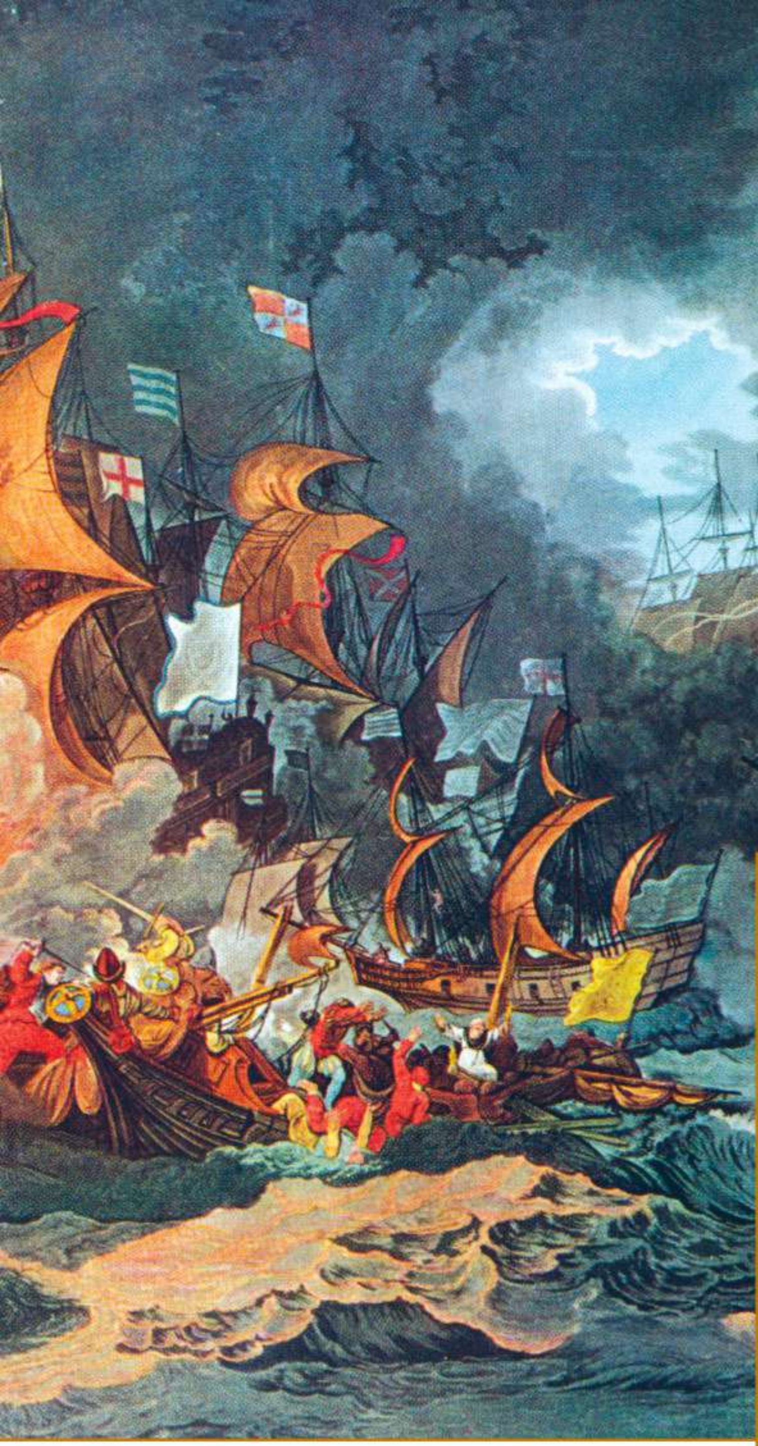
Drake sacked Santo Domingo, Cartagena and San Agustin on that voyage, but the pickings were slim. At Santo Domingo, he demanded a million ducats to stop him destroying the town. When this was refused, he burned part of it down. It was a civic version of an old pirate torture: binding combustible matter between a man's fingers and applying a flame. Eventually, when only part of it was left standing, the town paid him 25,000 ducats. Drake burned it down anyway.

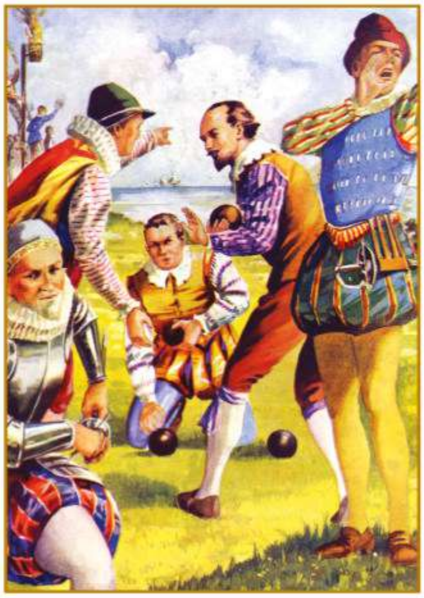
A NATIONAL HERO, BUT…

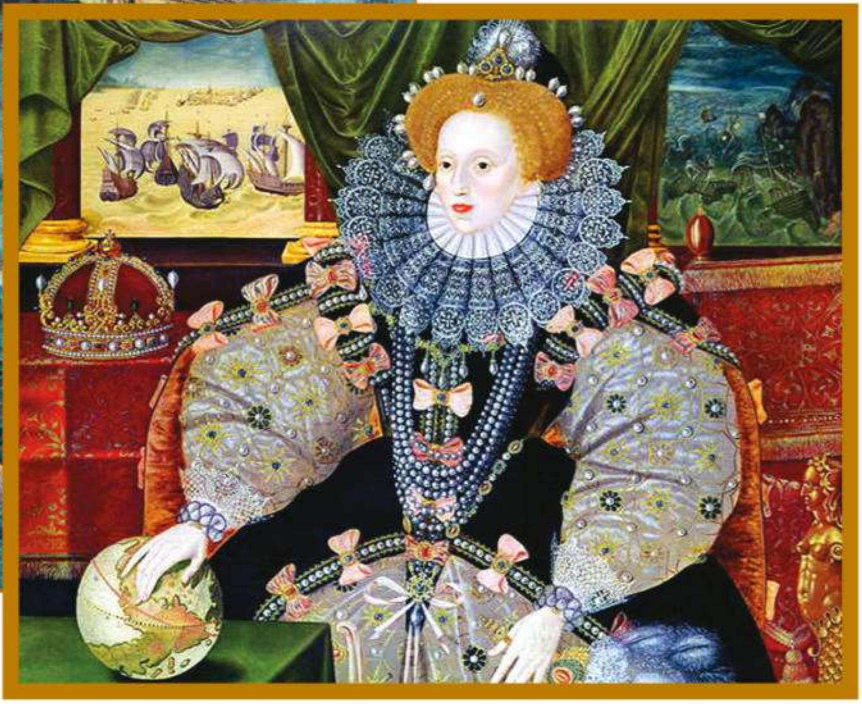
If at the state level there was a line between piracy and reprisal, where was the private, ethical line between self-interest and national interest? It's hard to know. Towards evening on 21 July 1588, for example, as English ships engaged the Spanish Armada in the Channel, Drake, in the Revenge, was given orders to lead the pursuit of the Spanish overnight. He was to hang a lantern astern for the rest of the fleet to follow.

But one Spanish ship, the Nuestra Señora del Rosario, had collided with another. Lagging behind, it became separated from the main fleet. Drake saw an opening. He had the lantern extinguished and, under cover of darkness, slipped away. Sunrise found the Revenge alongside the Rosario. Its captain surrendered without a fight. Did Drake know that the Rosario, one of the Armada's pay ships, had some 50,000 gold ducats on board? Almost certainly not. But nevertheless, he took a third of it for himself anyway.

Martin Frobisher, another sometime pirate who served the crown too, was incandescent. "Like a coward, he kept by [the Rosario] all night, because he would have her spoil," he said of Drake when the Armada crisis was past. "He thinketh to cozen us of our shares of 15,000 ducats; but we will have our shares, or I will make him spend the best blood in his belly."







SCANNING THE HORIZON

Frobisher had been part of the fleet that took the Madre de Dios; his role had been to patrol the Spanish coast in case the treasure ship got through. But it was another participant, the earl of Cumberland, who nearly bagged an even bigger prize two years later, when his ships encountered the 2,000-ton Cinco Chagas. It was, the Venetians heard, the richest ship ever to sail from the East Indies.

The English fell upon it near the Azores. After a ferocious gun battle lasting several hours, the bow of the treasure ship caught fire. Some of the Portuguese sailors waved flags of parley, but their captain still refused to surrender.

The Cinco Chagas burned all day and night. The next morning, the fire finally hit her powder store. The explosion "blew her abroad," Nicholas Downton, an English captain, recalled, "so that most of the ship did swim in parts above the water". Its treasure went to the bottom of the sea.

TOP-RIGHT
Legend has it that Drake finished up his game of bowls before setting out to fight the Armada

BOTTOM-RIGHT
The 'Armada Portrait' of Elizabeth I, commissioned to celebrate England's victory over Spain in 1588. The Spanish called her the "queen of pirates"

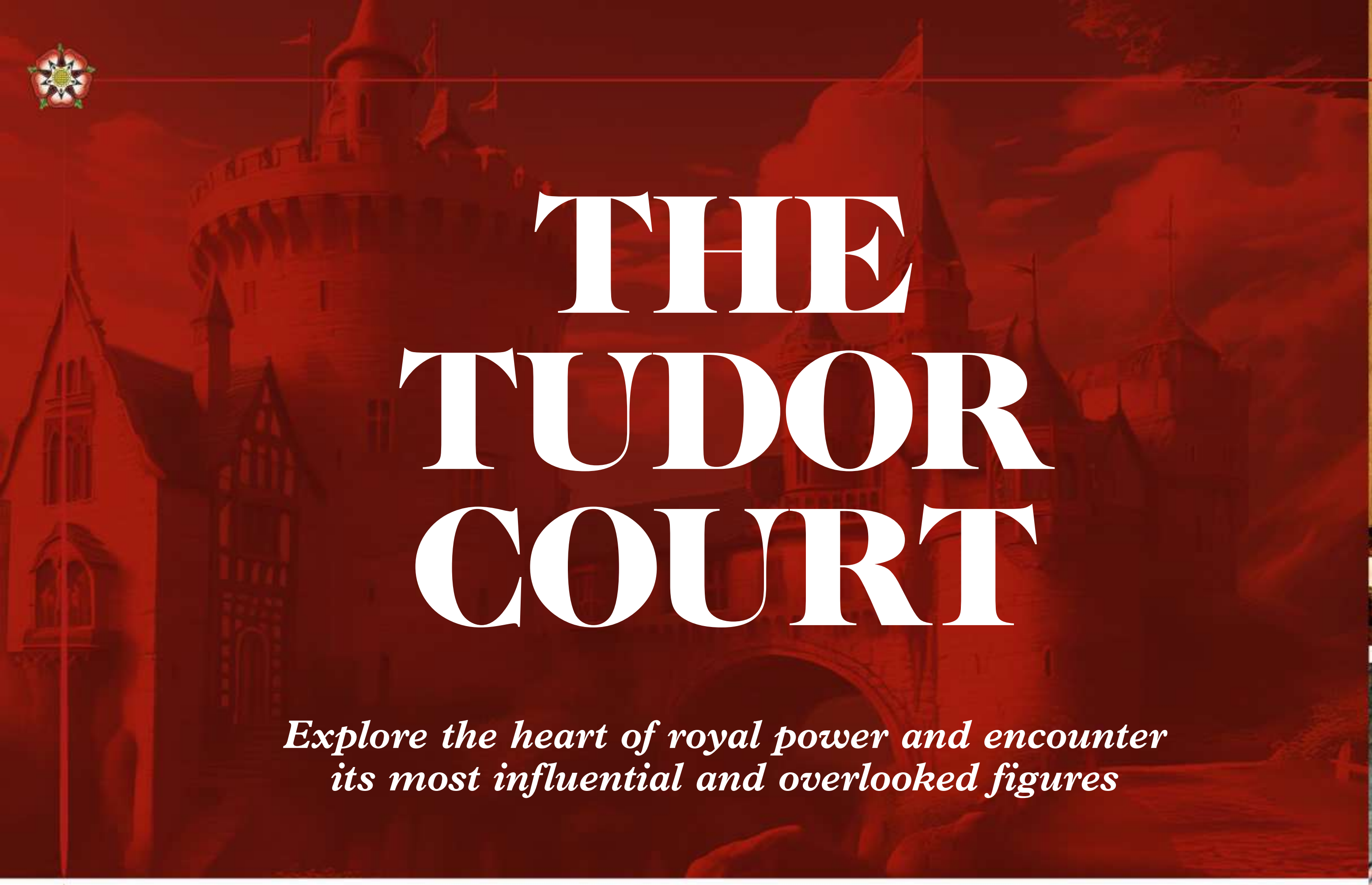
THE RECKONING

Looking back on Elizabeth's reign in 1598, Richard Hawkins, John's son, wrote: "That the war with Spain hath been profitable, no man can with reason gainsay. And how many millions we have taken from the Spaniard, is a thing notorious." English ships captured or destroyed well over a thousand Spanish or Portuguese ships between 1585 and 1603. In the first three years of the war alone, they caused some six million ducats of damage. Spanish trade with France and Flanders practically came to a halt.

And the scale of all these small private wars is remarkable. In 1563, Philip II was told that there were 400 English ships sailing under letters of reprisal off the French coast. Later in the century, Iberia's Atlantic seaboard teemed with English ships too.

There were "never less than two hundred sail... upon their coasts", it was later said. Voyages to Spanish America were necessarily rarer, but still undertaken in some numbers. Drake aside, at least 74 English voyages comprising 183 ships sailed for the West Indies between 1585 and 1603. There were likely many more.

But, like the Cinco Chagas, the very greatest prizes always remained tantalising, just a little out of reach.



THE TUDOR COURT

Explore the heart of royal power and encounter its most influential and overlooked figures

046 **Life in Tudor court**
Explore the highs and lows of living close to royalty

052 **The Tudor succession**
Uncover the series of succession crises that plagued the dynasty

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Take a look at the reigns of Henry VIII's six wives

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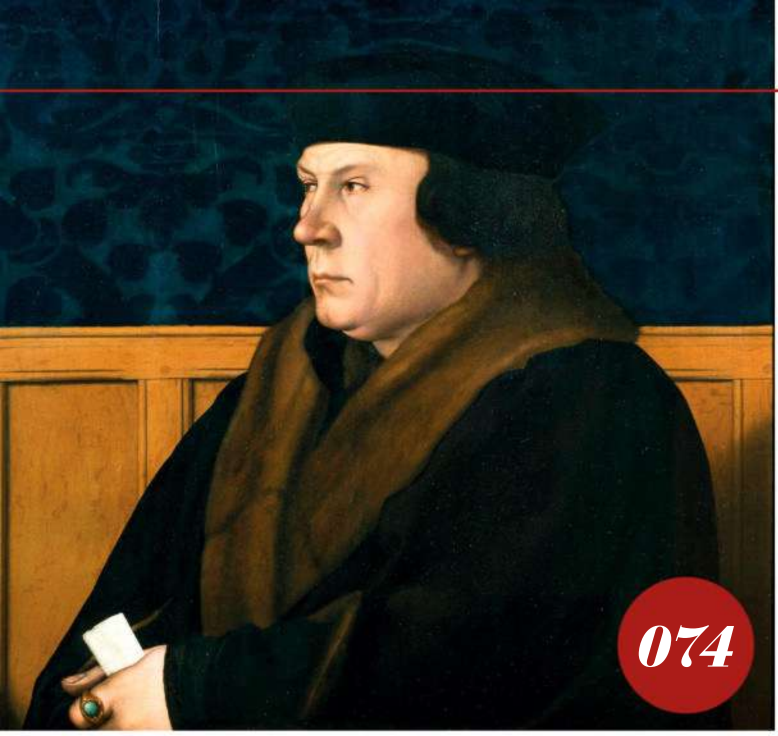
Meet Margaret and Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's overlooked sisters

074 **Crooked Cromwell**
Does Thomas Cromwell deserve his villanous repuation?

084 **Bess of Hardwick**
Meet the noblewoman who was a thorn in Gloriana's side



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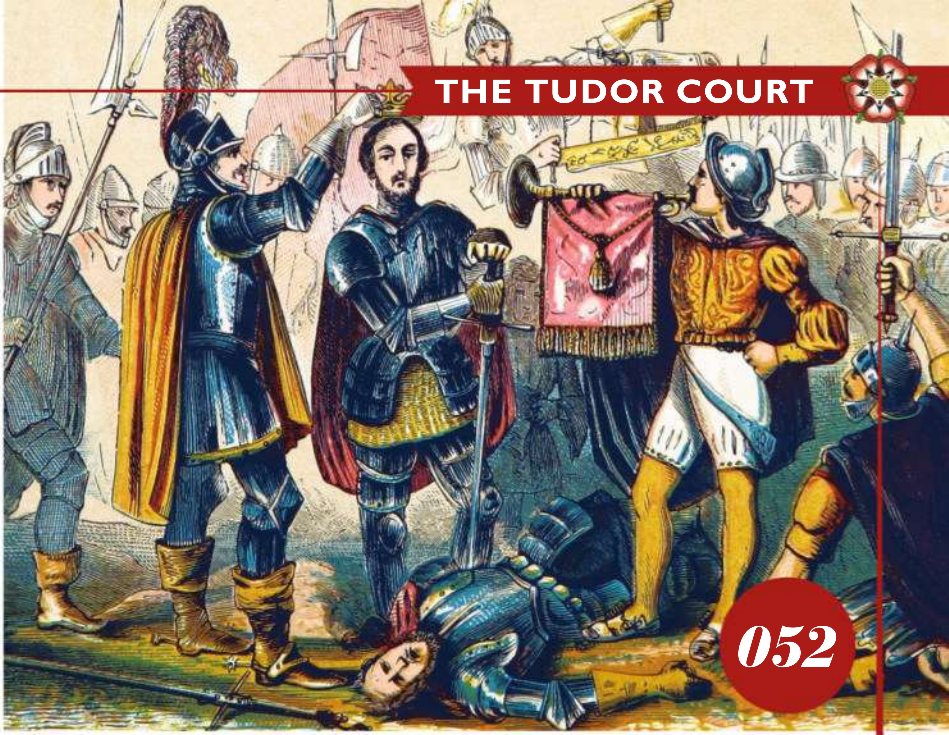

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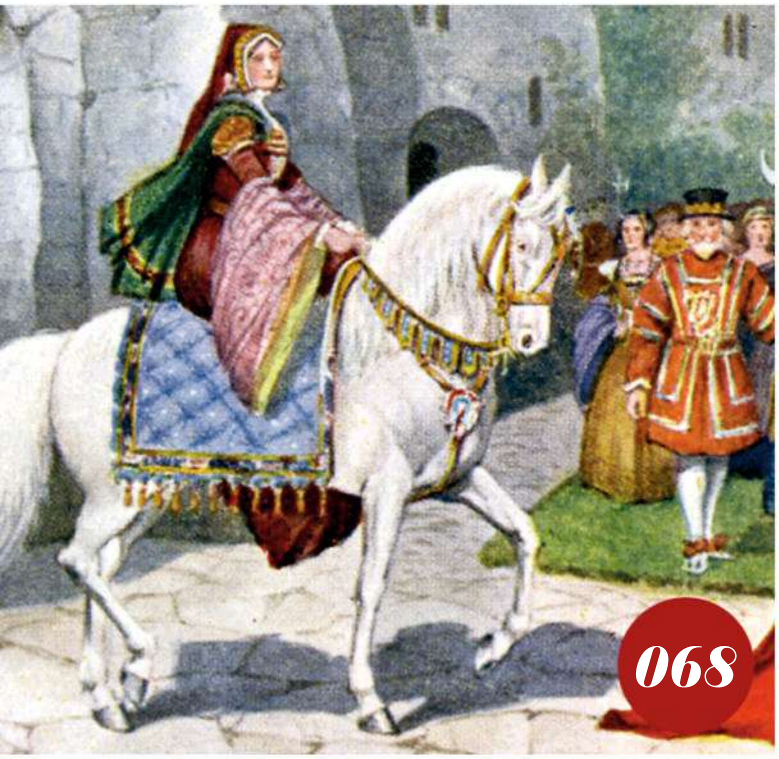

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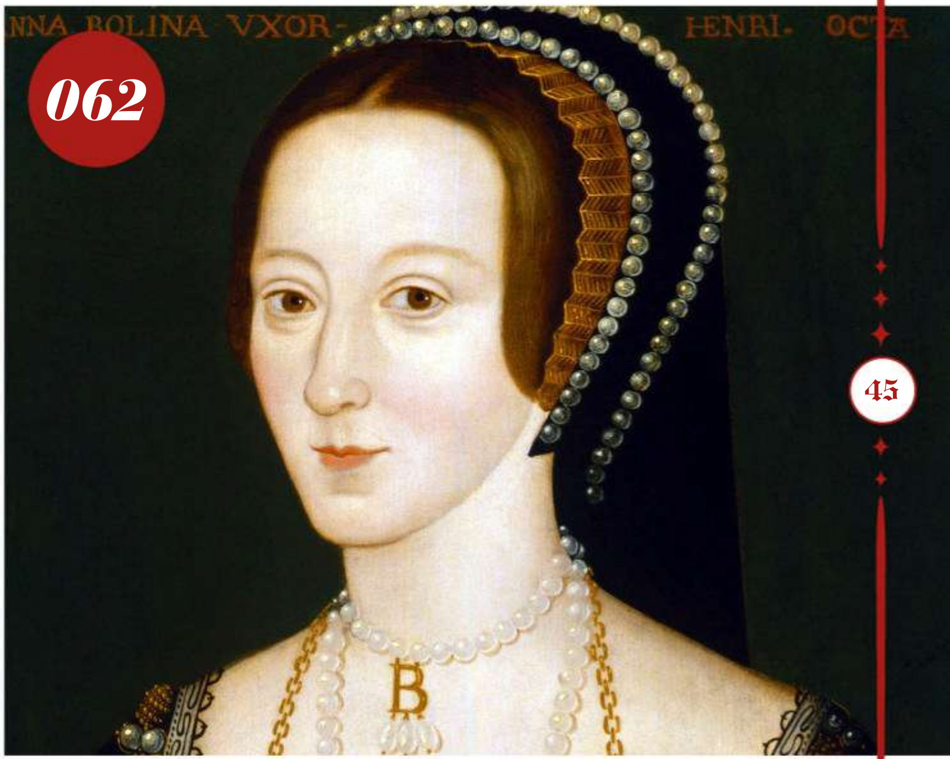
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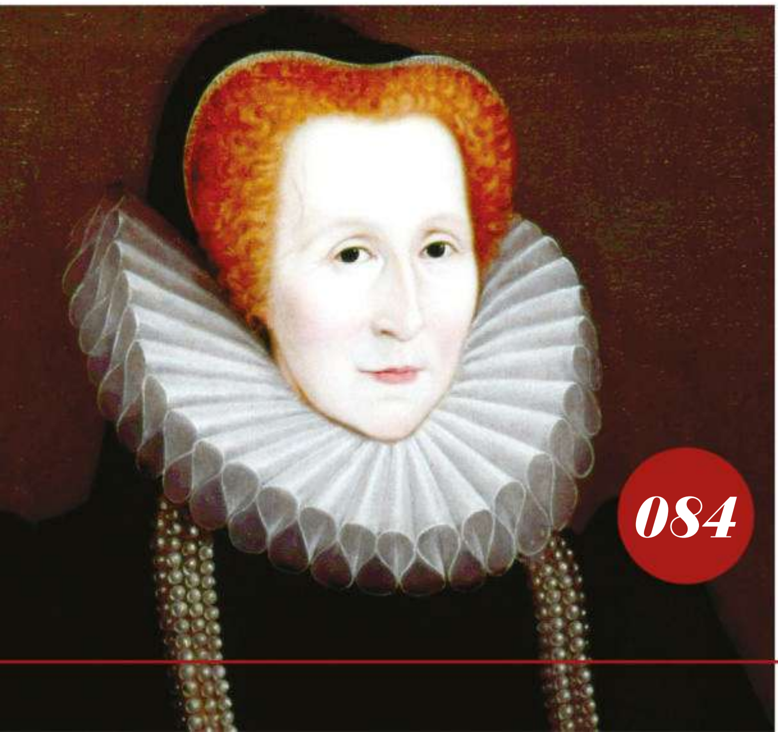

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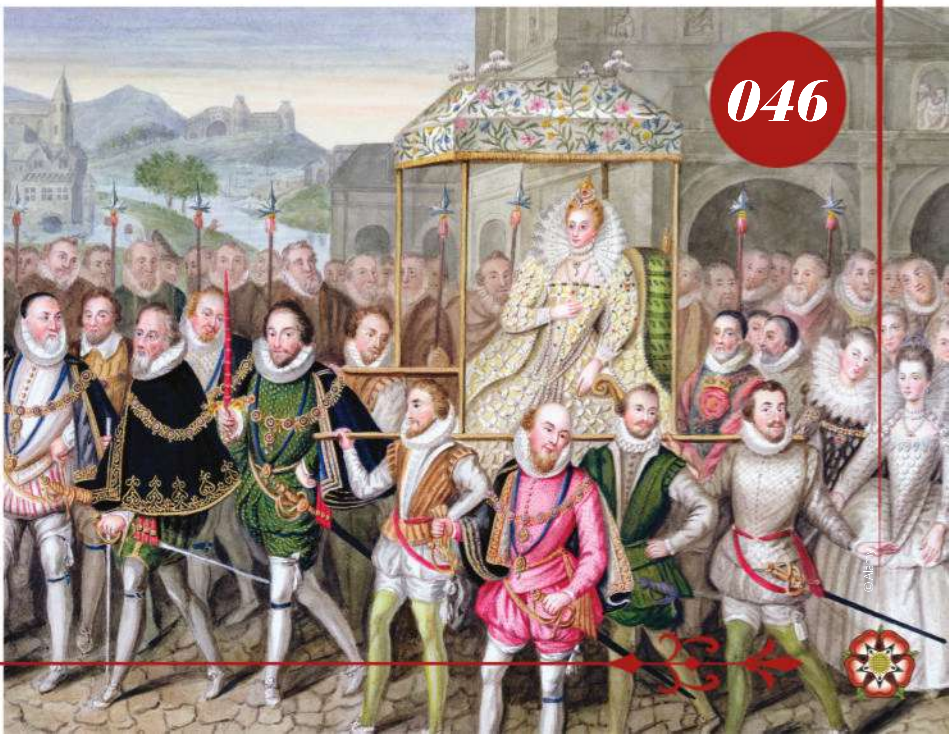

046

LIFE IN TUDOR COURT

For those living close to the king or queen, rich rewards were on offer. But displease a royal, or attract an enemy, and heads would almost certainly roll

Richard III was relaxing in Nottingham Castle, the imposing fortification perched on a raised mass of land in the midlands of England. Its impregnable walls made the Yorkist king feel safe. Yet, with 30 years of conflict blighting the land as the Houses of Lancaster and York clashed ferociously for the right to rule in the Wars of the Roses, trouble was always just around the corner.

So it was that Henry Tudor was visiting France, hoping to secure war money from the French king, Charles VIII. As the son of the great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt - the fourth son of King Edward III - Henry was about to stake his claim to the English crown. Within days, he and a strong army had landed at a Welsh port. Richard III had no choice but to send 12,000 troops to meet them.

The two sides met at Bosworth in England on 22 August 1485 and they were drawn into a bloody battle. With casualties rapidly building up and crimson red spilling to the ground, Richard III seized his chance. He charged across the battlefield in an attempt to slay Henry, but he failed. It was a vital mistake. A section of army belonging to Sir William Stanley, a man with an eye for backing a victor, turned on the king and killed him. The way was paved for a new dynasty of rulers and Henry Tudor would become King Henry VII.

Almost immediately, the new Tudor ruler sought stability, knowing it was vital if he was to hold on to the throne. As well as banning rich nobles from owning their own armies, he built around him a strong and sizable court. Believing it important to bring England's wealthiest individuals closer to the seat of power, and handing out important roles, Henry VII gained the support of around a thousand people, each one influential and of high-birth. They helped him fix a financially broken England and backed his austerity measures. The court also helped to build a country free from international war; one that was open to foreign trade.

Henry VII sought intellect among his courtiers, with literature and music coming to dominate. The king surrounded himself with poets and sculptors - among them Pietro Torrigiano, who created a bust of Henry - and he also enjoyed the company of scientists, humanists and historians. William Caxton, who had been a supporter of the York faction and was appointed Governor of the English merchants under the Yorkist king Edward IV, was nevertheless supported by Henry, who recognised his stature as the first printer of England. Such people would also come into contact with Henry's son - his successor Henry VIII - and they would shape the future king's cultural outlook.

Even so, political strife was never too far away and those attracted to the court often caused jealousy. "The king has the greatest desire to employ foreigners, but can not do so for the envy of the English is diabolical," a Spanish resident noted. "They have an antipathy to foreigners, and imagine that they never ▶

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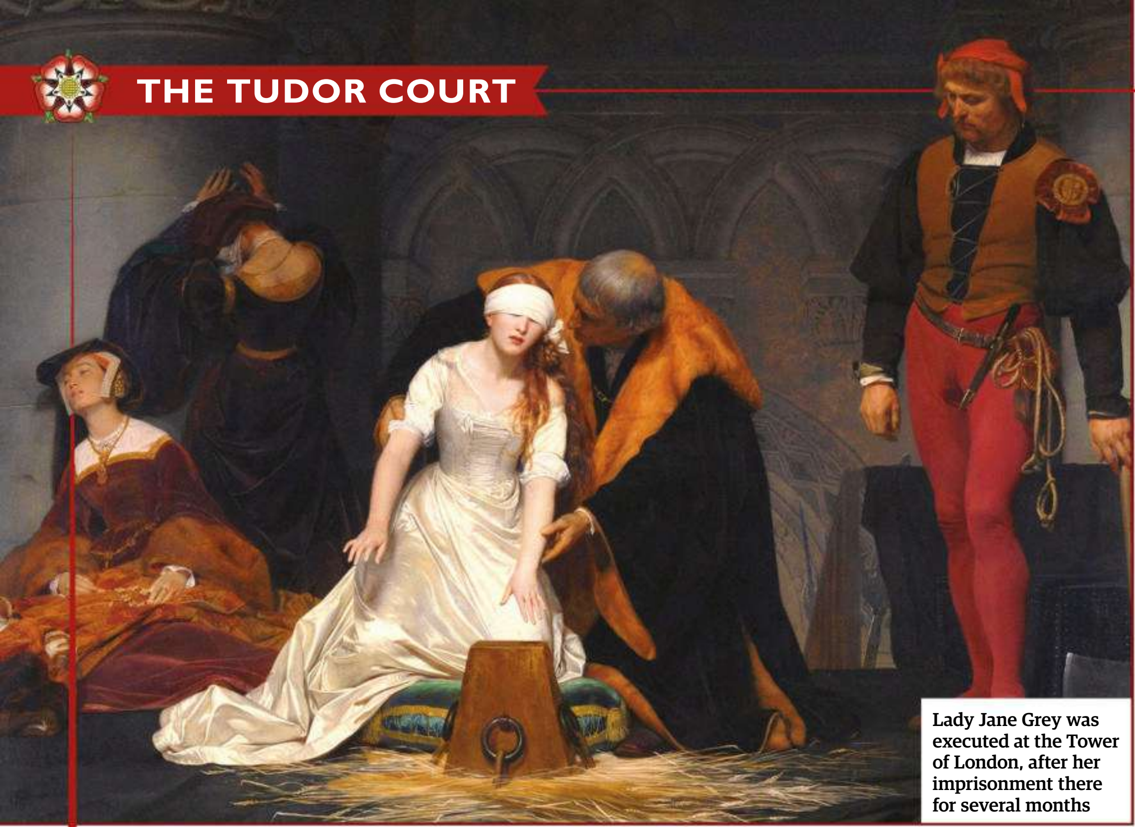
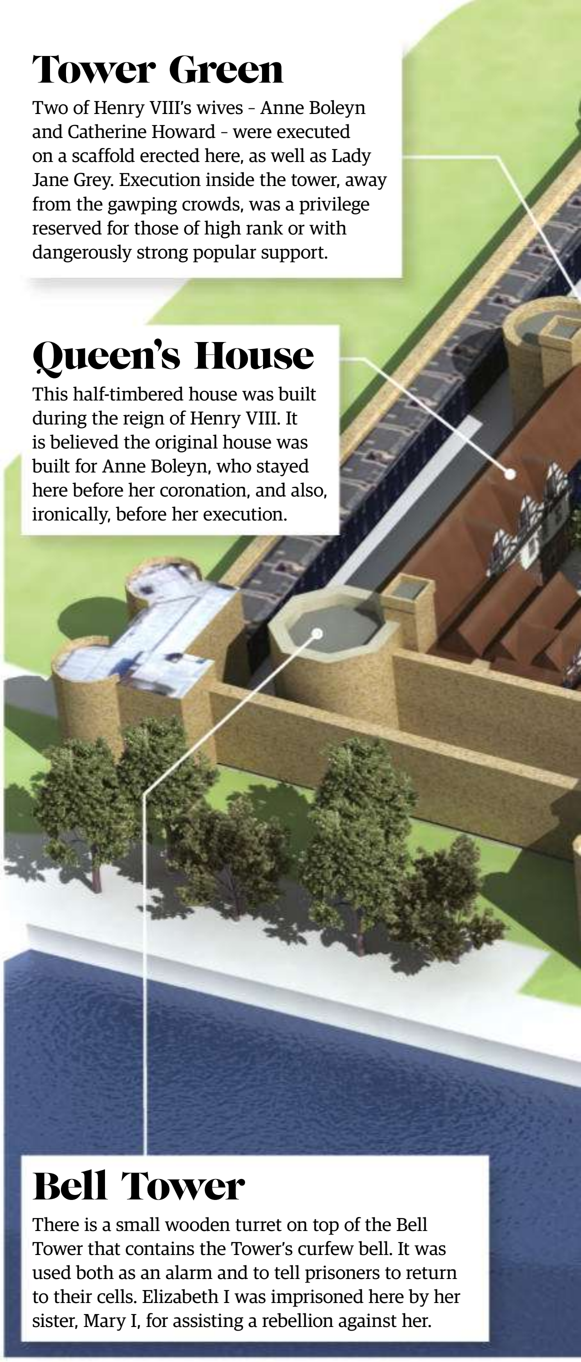


Lady Jane Grey was executed at the Tower of London, after her imprisonment there for several months



Tower Green

Two of Henry VIII's wives - Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard - were executed on a scaffold erected here, as well as Lady Jane Grey. Execution inside the tower, away from the gawping crowds, was a privilege reserved for those of high rank or with dangerously strong popular support.

Queen's House

This half-timbered house was built during the reign of Henry VIII. It is believed the original house was built for Anne Boleyn, who stayed here before her coronation, and also, ironically, before her execution.

Bell Tower

There is a small wooden turret on top of the Bell Tower that contains the Tower's curfew bell. It was used both as an alarm and to tell prisoners to return to their cells. Elizabeth I was imprisoned here by her sister, Mary I, for assisting a rebellion against her.

come into their island, but to make themselves masters of it, and to usurp their goods," a Venetian quipped. It wasn't long, therefore, before factions emerged, with various groups of individuals coming together with a common purpose and willing to do all they could to get their ideas through. Combined with the general paranoia felt by many of the royals during the Tudor era, these groups felt they could influence the thinking of kings and queens. In doing so, they created incredible tension, not only within the ruled lands but overseas too. The court became both a desirable and treacherous place.

To become close to a king or queen - or at least close to someone close to a king or queen - would allow a courtier a sense of success and boost their chances of privilege and wealth. As the commoners outside the court farmed the land, traded in market towns and worked their fingers to the bone to scrape a living, the landowners, merchants, lawyers, noblemen and learned scholars were among those seeking patronage and power.

The two sets of lives could not have been more disparate and it was very easy to spot the difference in stature. As the public wore clothing made from cheap material, the male courtiers would wear attractive patterned shirts created in wool, linen or silk, over which would be a jacket. They would also wear hose. The women would don lavish velvet or silk gowns that flowed to the floor, and their hair would be swept beneath a French hood. The court was a rich place to be.

Bishop Thomas Ruthall knew this more than most. He had amassed great wealth from land that exceeded the cash being generated for the king. Cardinal Thomas Wolsey also noted the trappings that court life offered, not that it was ever hidden. The problem for Wolsey was that he was a man of lower-birth, the son of an Ipswich butcher. His intellect was so great that he had been able to better himself through the church. He graduated from Oxford, becoming a royal chaplain and gaining himself a place on the King's Council. He would become Archbishop of York and a cardinal, and the king passed much of the work of running the realm to him, which gave him power, influence and wealth.

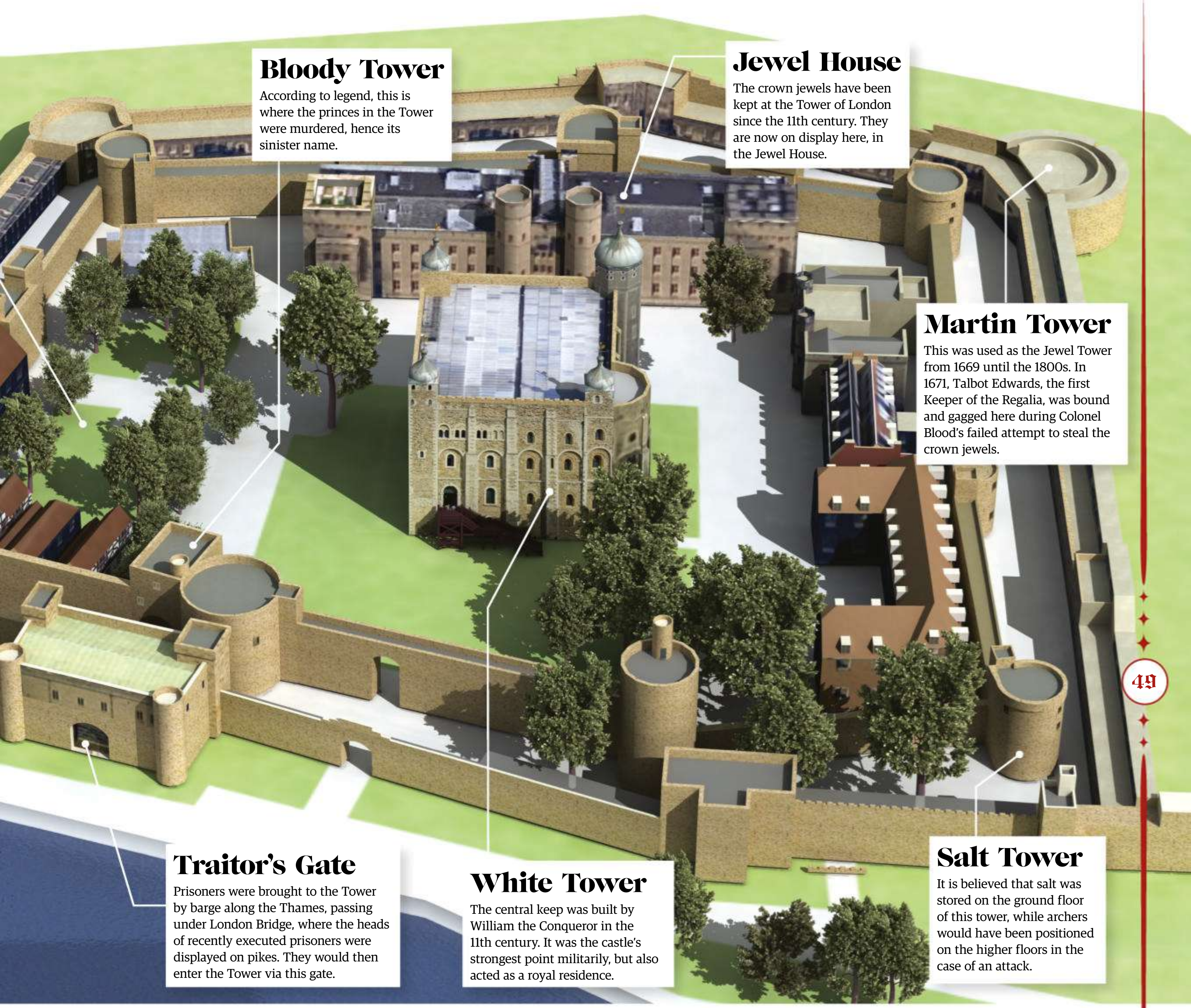
Henry VIII welcomed Wolsey, not minding his social climbing and actually believing it to be a bonus. The king was paranoid about the influence some of the noblemen and wealthy courtiers had on those around him and he felt that Wolsey would be more grateful for his place within court circles. Yet the nobles resented Wolsey's success and they repeatedly clashed with him. Wolsey would often use his intellect to humiliate them.

He believed the nobles to be inferior and lucky to have power only through birth and not graft and intelligence. For Bishop Ruthall, pushed aside by Wolsey, the animosity could not have been greater. Ruthall worked under Wolsey and hated being accountable to him. On one occasion Wolsey asked for a survey of the royal revenues, but Ruthall accidentally presented him with an inventory of his own fortune. Wolsey delighted in showing the king, and the stress of the disclosure caused much ill-health for Ruthall, who died as a result.

Wolsey also clashed with Charles Brandon as well as Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk. The duke delighted in Wolsey's eventual downfall, while Brandon would go on to replace him as the king's main confidante. But before Wolsey was cast aside by Henry VIII, he is said to have been responsible for the death of Edward Stafford, Third Duke of Buckingham. The pair had fought because Stafford resented Wolsey's low-birth, while Wolsey (and Henry VIII) hated that Stafford had been given land, wealth and descent from Thomas of Woodstock, son of Edward III. So when Wolsey received a letter that accused the duke of treason, he was only too happy to pass it to the king. Henry VIII ordered a swift execution.

Thomas Cromwell, a close ally of Wolsey, was also opposed by court factions, his low birth and closeness to the king being deciding factors in his unpopularity. Cromwell had cleverly steered England through the break with Rome and the dissolution of the monasteries, but they opened up fresh conflict within the court. With some courtiers displeased over the issues regarding Henry's marital life and the shift to Lutherian thinking, there was backstabbing aplenty as Protestant and Catholic factions emerged.

Thomas More campaigned against the Reformation, which brought Protestantism to England and put Henry VIII as head of the country's church, despite the threat of treason and death hanging over him. Howard detested Cromwell and arrested him with glee when, despite becoming a favourite of the king, he



Bloody Tower

According to legend, this is where the princes in the Tower were murdered, hence its sinister name.

Jewel House

The crown jewels have been kept at the Tower of London since the 11th century. They are now on display here, in the Jewel House.

Martin Tower

This was used as the Jewel Tower from 1669 until the 1800s. In 1671, Talbot Edwards, the first Keeper of the Regalia, was bound and gagged here during Colonel Blood's failed attempt to steal the crown jewels.

Traitor's Gate

Prisoners were brought to the Tower by barge along the Thames, passing under London Bridge, where the heads of recently executed prisoners were displayed on pikes. They would then enter the Tower via this gate.

White Tower

The central keep was built by William the Conqueror in the 11th century. It was the castle's strongest point militarily, but also acted as a royal residence.

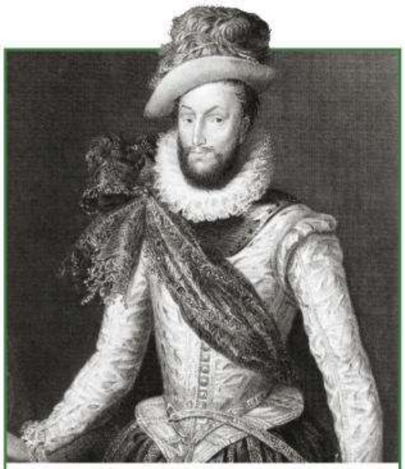
Salt Tower

It is believed that salt was stored on the ground floor of this tower, while archers would have been positioned on the higher floors in the case of an attack.

© Alamy, Adrian Mann

The history of the Tower of London

The Tower of London has been an iconic part of England's capital city for close to 1,000 years, built under the commission of the country's conqueror, William Duke of Normandy. The first foundations of the 27 metre (89 feet) high stone fortress known as the White Tower were laid in 1078 and it initially served as a fear-inducing residential palace, its walls an impenetrable 4.5 metres (15 feet) thick. As subsequent kings took to the throne, the Tower of London evolved with extra walls, towers, buildings and a moat also being added. King Henry VIII used the Tower to store weapons, documents and precious possessions including jewellery. His collection of lions and exotic animals was housed in the Lion Tower and there were extensive lodgings, carefully renovated and modernised, with the Queen's Great Chamber, Great Hall and kitchens being given careful attention. Of greater note, though, were the gruesome goings-on taking place within its walls. The Tower was used to imprison and torture many high-profile victims, particularly from 1534, the year the king was granted Royal Supremacy which declared him the supreme head of the Church of England. Before Henry VIII, only one person had lost their head in the Tower of London, but during his later reign, political opponents would be snatched from the streets – usually on trumped-up charges of treason or heresy – and locked away in the most squalid of conditions. Executions – usually beheadings – became commonplace. Sir Thomas More was one of the first religious and political prisoners. He had written polemics against Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation and he had even assisted the king in writing Defence of the Seven Sacraments, which was dedicated to Pope Leo X. But More's refusal to acknowledge the king as head of the Church of England and his snubbing of the coronation of Anne Boleyn in June 1533 upset Henry. Imprisoned for high treason, he was publicly beheaded on Tower Hill. Similar fates met Thomas Cromwell, the king's right-hand man, and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who had argued Catherine of Aragon's case against Henry VIII's desire for a marriage annulment.



A portrait of the cunning courtier Sir Walter Raleigh, whose secret marriage threw him straight into Elizabeth I's bad books

Courtly players

Charles Brandon

As one of Tudor England's most ruthless social climbers and a prominent courtier, Charles Brandon was the first Duke of Suffolk and a loyal ally of King Henry VIII. He married the king's sister, Mary Tudor, around 1514, and in 1529 he helped to overthrow the chief minister, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey.

Walter Raleigh

Privileged explorer Walter Raleigh charmed his way into the good books of Queen Elizabeth I, who knighted him and made him captain of the Queen's Guard in 1587. She locked him up in the Tower of London five years later when she jealously discovered he had secretly married Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of her ladies-in-waiting.

Philip Sidney

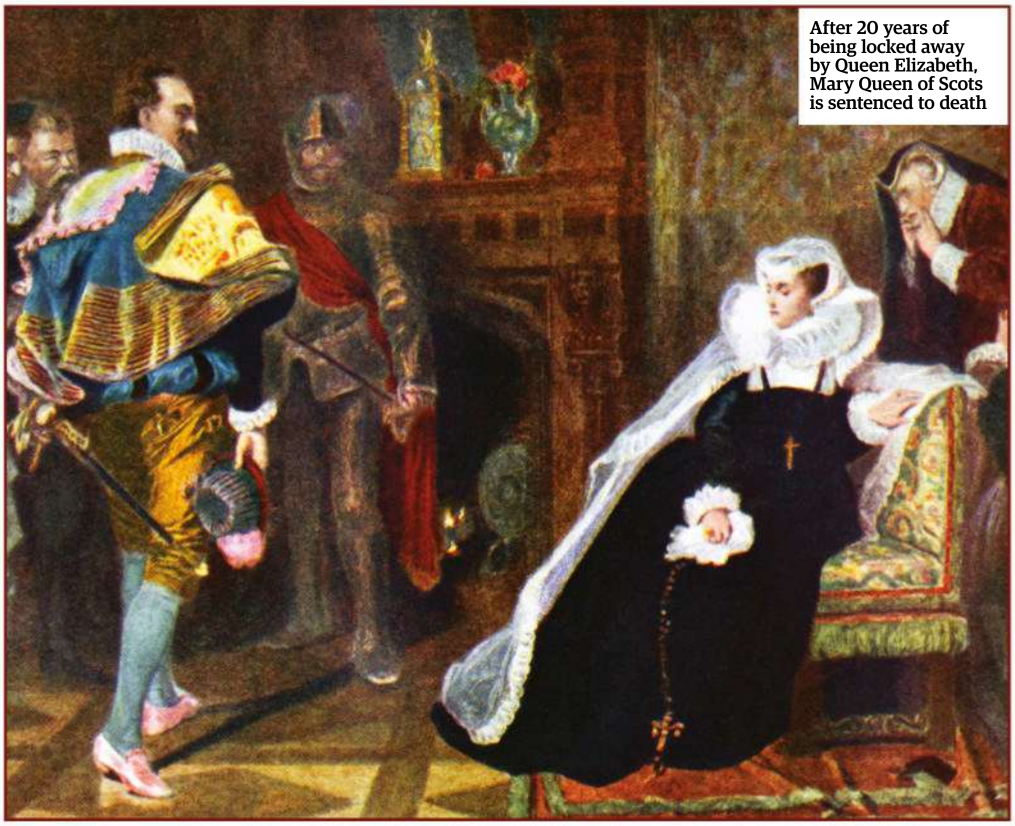
Shakespeare and Marlowe were great Tudor-era playwrights, but poet Philip Sidney was a prominent courtier who was sent as ambassador to the German emperor and the Prince of Orange, and promoted the arts. He nurtured poets such as Edmund Spenser, who inked The Faerie Queen, which celebrated Queen Elizabeth I and the Tudor dynasty.

William Compton

When his father died, William Compton became a page to two-year-old Prince Henry, becoming close friends. Compton was later appointed as Henry VIII's Groom of the Stool – serving the king while he used the latrine. Henry' trust earned him promotions and Compton became a wealthy, influential man with numerous crown posts.

Sir Francis Walsingham

Brought into the fold by William Cecil who admired his talent, Walsingham flourished under Elizabeth I's reign. The spymaster's effective intelligence network focused on foreign enemies and those suspected of plotting from within. He discovered the Babington Plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I, which led to the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.



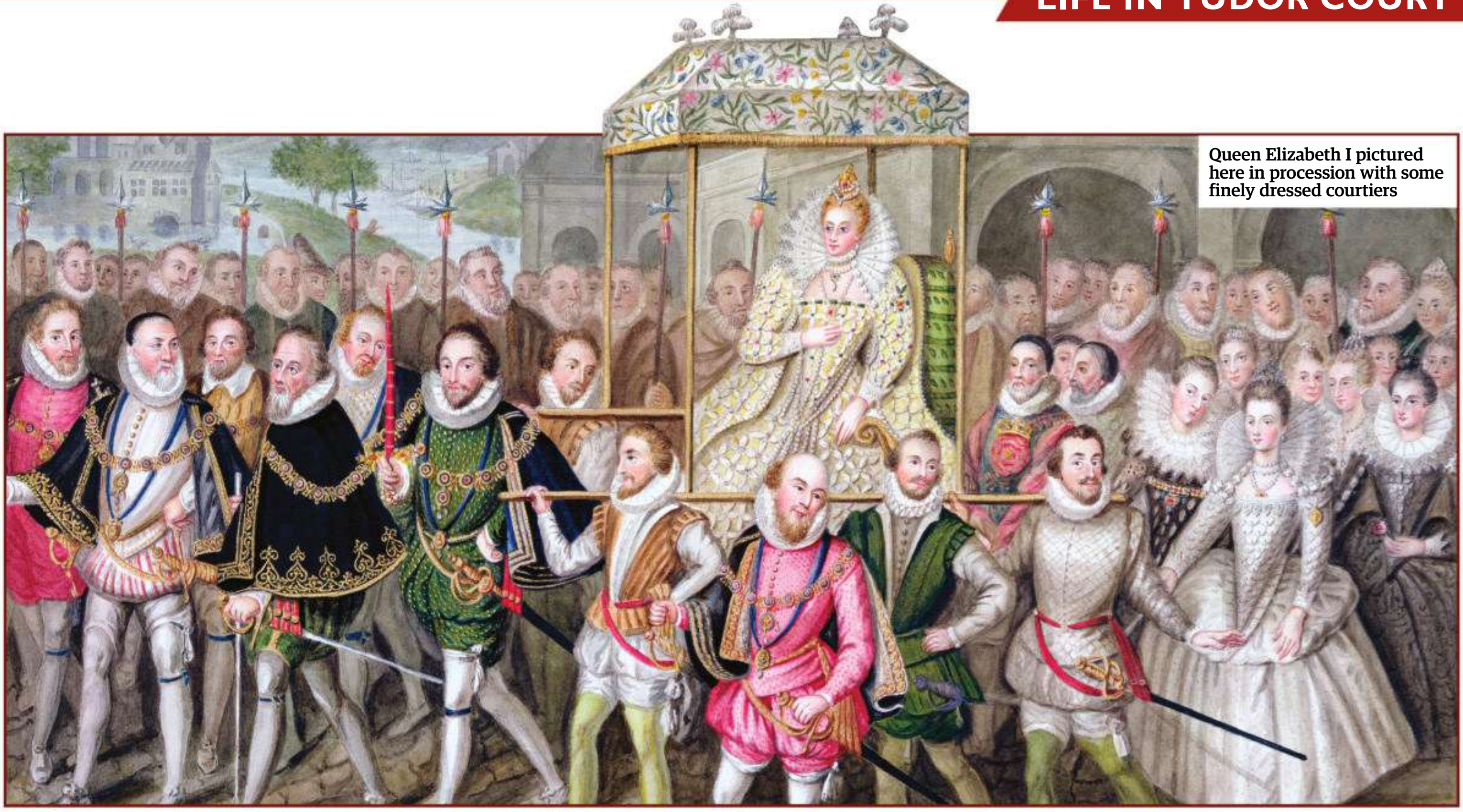
After 20 years of being locked away by Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots is sentenced to death

made an error by suggesting Anne of Cleves as a suitable queen. During some bloody years, the Boleyns, Poles and Howards were destroyed. It was clear that to displease the king was disastrous. And yet for those in favour, it was a time of plenty.

The court of Henry VIII had much internal unrest, but the king was far more lavish than his father and he did much to undo the years of financial grafting with a rather more carefree outlook. Foreign influence was welcomed and it saw eminent scholars such as the Dutchman Desiderius Erasmus becoming a regular visitor to the court. He was a great thinker who taught at Cambridge and who rallied against the radicalism of some of the most extreme leaders of the Protestant Reformation.

Staying on the right side of the king and the subsequent royals was crucial, though. If nothing else, it guaranteed good food. To be able to feast on delightful, well-prepared meats in lavish, abundant banquets was a real treat, with those in the court filling their stomachs with peacocks, swans, blackbirds, boar, deer and geese. The diets of the courtiers, as well as the king, was poor in vegetables since they were seen as the foodstuffs of the have-nots. But as they carved at their food with knives, scooped with silver spoons and dug in with their hands, they savoured every mouthful. The guests would enjoy the flavours of the meat, enhanced with imported spices and locally grown herbs, while washing it down with wine drunk from carefully crafted glasses. If their expensively tailored clothes were not bursting at the seams after this, they would gobble down rich, attractive desserts made of marchpane, a marzipan consisting of ground almonds and sugar. At the same time, the courtiers were kept entertained. Leisure time was valued in the court, primarily because Henry VIII loved to frolic rather than work. He enjoyed hunting and sport, and they became common pastimes for the courtiers too. Jousting tournaments were enjoyed on holy days and special occasions, and there was also much time for relaxation with music. The king was a keen musician and composer, but there were many influences and visitors from Europe. The opera, anthem, masque and madrigal emerged during the Tudor period, with Thomas Tallis, Robert Johnson, Orlando Gibbons, John Farmer, John Dowland and William Byrd among the great English composers.

Edward VI's coronation upon Henry VIII's death did not lead to a cultural morass, but it did lead to more jostling for power. The Duke of Somerset was initially the young king's Protector, but the Duke of Northumberland persuaded the king to remove him from power; he then took over the role. But a true paranoid period emerged when Mary I was crowned after deposing and executing the Protestant proclaimed queen, Lady Jane Grey. Jane, who had been named by Edward as his heir, had only been on the throne for nine days. During her reign, Mary I had brought Catholicism back to England, burning Protestants and allying herself with Spain. It split the country, led to underground movements and created martyrs such as Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. He had fled Cambridge for Essex due to a plague, helped Henry VIII divorce Catherine of Aragon, and



Queen Elizabeth I pictured here in procession with some finely dressed courtiers

become the Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury - but that religious siding put him at odds with Mary I and he was burnt to death. Mary's entire reign was marked by bloodshed and the Tower of London became a busy place. Indeed, torture was routine for courtiers who fell out of favour, with all manner of devilish devices invented for maximum pain and discomfort. A trip to the Tower of London was no treat.

Elizabeth I's court was no less troublesome. She spent much of her time in Whitehall, although she also had the pick of many other royal palaces, from St James to Windsor Castle to Greenwich and Richmond. Courtiers would socialise and be entertained in the queen's presence in the Presence Chamber, where music, plays, a masque or ball would be staged. Bear- and dog-baiting attracted crowds of courtiers. The men in Elizabethan times would be impeccably dressed, padded round trunks replacing the tight-fitting hose of earlier court life. The women had wire within their dresses to give them a look of narrow waists. The tops would generally reveal more than a hint of bosom.

The queen expected great respect, love and loyalty from the courtiers and she wanted them to be flirtatious while understanding well that she would never reciprocate (although there are suggestions that she did have affairs with some courtiers, including Christopher Hatton who became Lord Chancellor of England and Robert Dudley, a political advisor). The courtiers playing music and declarations of devotion helped to focus the court's attention on her. The men were more than happy to play around, though, since it offered them to chance of special favours that would hand them high positions and wealth.

Under Elizabeth I, England flourished and the period became known as the 'golden age'. To some extent, her courtiers were like an extended family, especially since she never married herself. She would hand gifts to courtiers and servants with gold-plated items reserved for the higher ranks. She also invited key explorers into her court, including Francis Drake, who raided Spanish ships with the queen's support. He plundered gold for her and built English riches. Walter Raleigh emerged as one of her favourites and there was a possibility of some love interest until he secretly married; this enraged her, igniting her jealousy. Still, Raleigh's efforts helped to pave the way for the British Empire which stretched across the globe, and at least he survived the Tudor era.

Throughout the early parts of Elizabeth's reign, though, Mary, Queen of Scots was ever-present, and she was eventually locked away in England by Elizabeth for almost 20 years. The Catholics threatened to remove Elizabeth from power and install Mary instead. Despite being the queen's cousin, Mary was beheaded in 1587 and while Elizabeth agreed to the execution, she had tried to backtrack. Her secretary William Davison was blamed for delivering the warrant despite the change of heart, and he was fined and imprisoned in the Tower of London as a result.

Elizabeth was the last of the Tudor dynasty; she was replaced by her first cousin twice removed, James IV of Scotland, who ruled England as James I. The son of Mary, Queen of Scots, James was a member of the Stuart family. In 1603, after 118 years, an exciting and eventful chapter in British royal history had come to an end.

What do we mean by the term 'Tudor court'?

The kings and queens of the Tudor period lived in many different places, from the Palace of Westminster to Baynard's Castle. Surrounding the monarch were hundreds of noblemen and servants who looked after them, both personally and supportively.

Each was selected for their talents and collective ability to highlight the rich, powerful and important nature of the royals. Already wealthy in their own right, courtiers would enjoy the best clothes, the tastiest, meatiest food, and the finest music, poetry and art. Their lives were a world apart from the poor living outside of the court, but there was much pressure to remain within: to displease a monarch risked being banished or executed. This naturally led to feuding as courtiers tried to get as close to the leading man or woman as possible to gain the greatest favours.

There was an important physical court, too: Hampton Court. Acquired by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey in 1514, what had once been a large house became a palace fit for a king, a true display of wealth and power. Wolsey used it to host diplomatic visits and to entertain, reinforcing his position as the second most powerful man in the realm.

But when Wolsey lost his power, he also lost his home. Seized by Henry VIII in 1528, Hampton Court became the king's favourite royal residence. Equipped with huge kitchens, a chapel and Great Hall for dining, its gardens were magnificently landscaped and there was good sanitation. Hampton Court continued to be popular following Henry's death, taken on by subsequent heirs. It provided a beautiful country retreat and was perfect for impressing foreign delegations.

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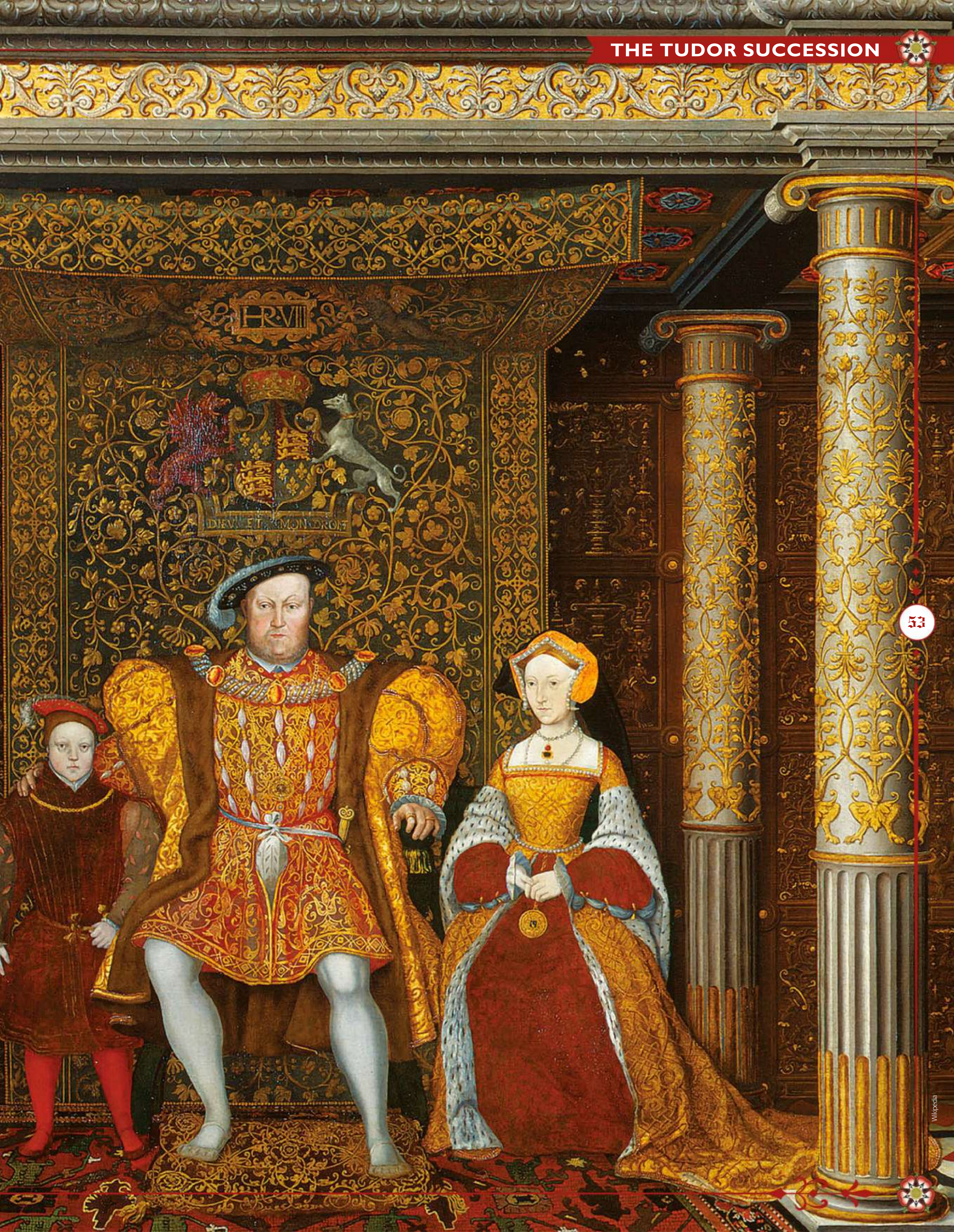
THE TUDOR SUCCESSION

For over 100 years, England's most famous royal dynasty struggled to survive during a series of succession crises that changed the kingdom forever

WRITTEN BY TOM GARNER

The rise of the Tudors was in many ways one of the great surprises of history. Its first monarch, King Henry VII, had never been expected to rule England and had a tenuous claim to the English throne. Nevertheless, Henry rose from a period of dynastic civil wars known as the 'Wars of the Roses' between two branches of the Plantagenet dynasty: the ruling 'Lancastrian' dynasty of King Henry VI and his 'Yorkist' rivals, who were initially led by Richard, 3rd Duke of York. From 1455 until 1471, the Lancastrians and Yorkists fought battles that led to Henry VI being deposed twice and replaced by King Edward IV, who was York's eldest son.

Henry VI was murdered in 1471 and Edward IV ruled without opposition until his own death in 1483. Virtually all Lancastrian claimants to the throne were dead with the obscure exception of Henry, 2nd Earl of Richmond – the future Henry VII. A half-nephew of Henry VI, Henry primarily claimed his right to the throne from his mother, Margaret Beaufort. A direct descendent of King Edward III's son John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, Margaret nevertheless descended from an illegitimate Lancastrian line, which made Henry's claim dubious in the eyes of many. Through his father Edmund, Henry descended from a noble Welsh family known as the Tudors of Penmynydd. However, the Tudors were local aristocrats with no claim to the English throne. Nevertheless, as the surviving Lancastrian claimant, Henry spent most of his early life in exile until the death of Edward IV changed everything. ▶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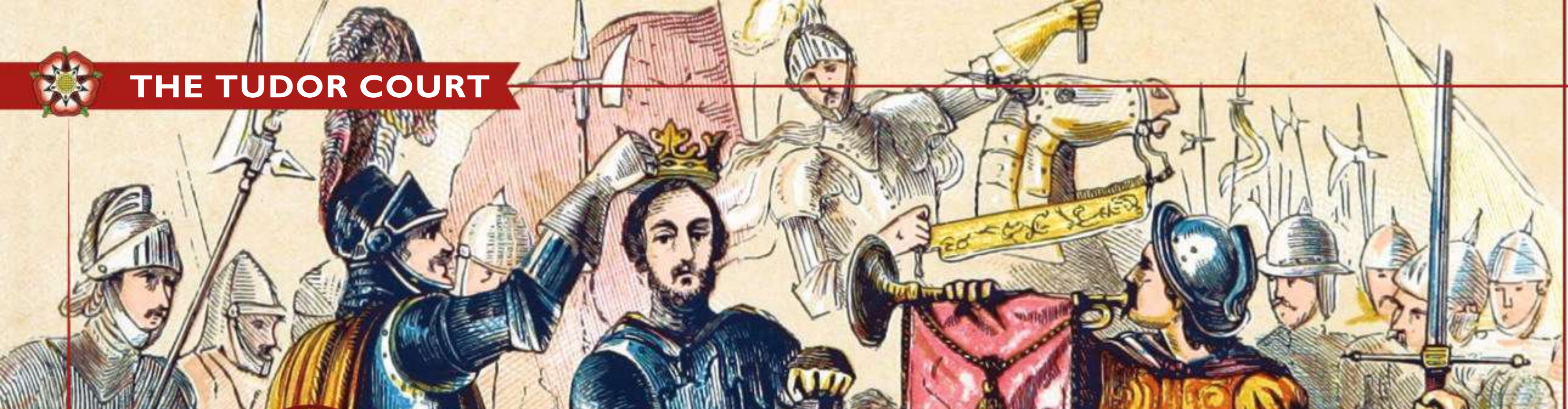
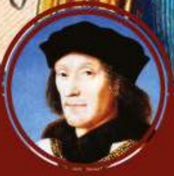


Henry VII was crowned on the battlefield after winning the Battle of Bosworth in 1485



King Henry VII

HENRY ESTABLISHED THE TUDOR DYNASTY AND BROUGHT PEACE AND PROSPERITY TO ENGLAND

Pros

Henry ended the Wars of the Roses by defeating his opponents and marrying Elizabeth of York.

Henry defeated several rebellions to depose him, including winning the Battle of Stoke in 1487.

By arranging political marriages for his children with foreign royal houses, Henry restored English diplomatic prestige in Europe.

Henry commissioned the Italian navigator John Cabot's famous voyage to North America in 1497.

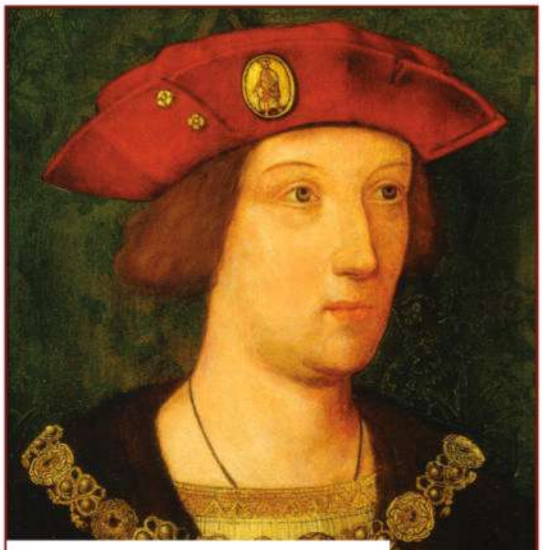
His various foreign and trade policies boosted the English economy and his prudence stabilised government finances.

Cons

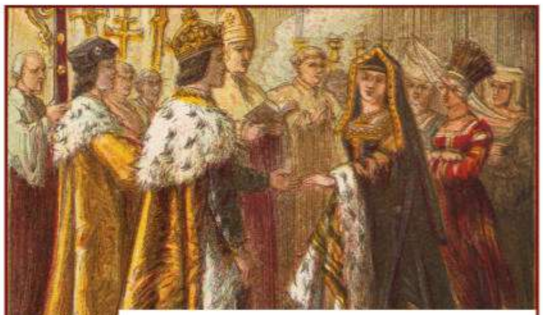
Henry was notoriously capricious and employed unscrupulous tax collectors in order to heavily tax his subjects.

A contemporary historian, Polydore Vergil, stated Henry's "virtues were obscured in later life by greed".

After a failed plot by the pretender Perkin Warbeck, Henry tried and executed Edward, 17th Earl of Warwick. A nephew of Edward IV and Richard III, Warwick possibly suffered from mental illness and was probably innocent of any sort of treason.



The early death of Arthur, Prince of Wales, haunted the Tudor succession for decades



The marriage of Henry VII to Elizabeth of York secured the Tudor dynasty and also laid the early foundations of Stuart rule in England

BOSWORTH

The Yorkist hold on the throne had appeared secure with Edward's eldest 12-year-old son succeeding him as King Edward V in April 1483. However, Edward IV's eldest brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, assumed power, with Edward V and his younger brother disappearing in the Tower of London. Gloucester was crowned as King Richard III on 6 July 1483 and his nephews were assumed to have been murdered.

Richard's crowning was controversial and he immediately faced opposition. Across the English Channel in France, Henry saw an opportunity to seize the throne and landed in Wales in August 1485. With a ragtag army, he advanced into England where he clashed with Richard's forces at the Battle of Bosworth Field on 22 August 1485.

Although outnumbered, Henry's forces won the battle and Richard was killed during the fighting. Through force of arms, Henry had ascended to the throne against the odds and killed the last Plantagenet king of England. He was crowned as King Henry VII at Westminster Abbey on 30 October 1485.

POLITICAL MARRIAGES

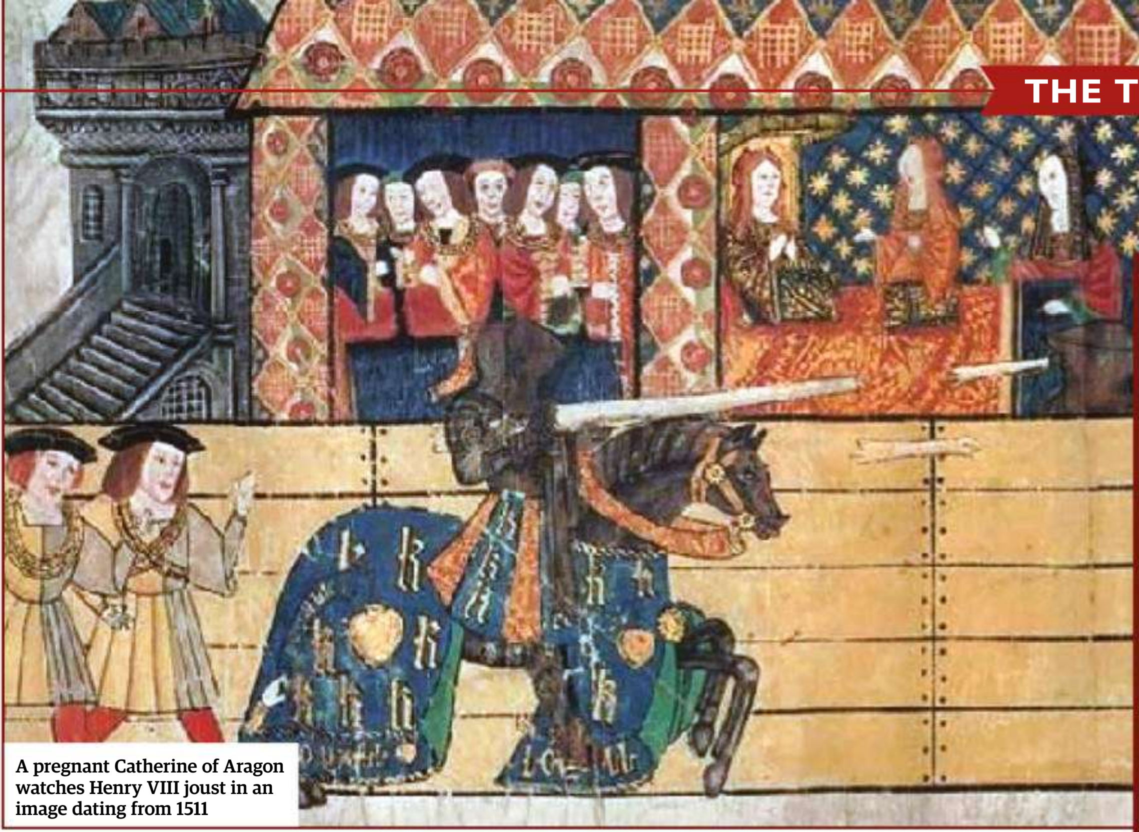
Ostensibly a Lancastrian, Henry was actually the founder of a new dynasty - the Tudors. He declared himself king by right of conquest but Henry was acutely aware that his hold on power was shaky. There remained Yorkist claimants to the throne and so he planned to cement his legitimacy by marrying Edward IV's eldest daughter, Elizabeth of York, in 1486.

By marrying Elizabeth, Henry's aim was to unite the Yorkists and Lancastrians under one ruling Tudor dynasty. However, this would not be complete until the succession was secured. Western European kings believed in primogeniture, the right of royal succession by the eldest-born child and - more specifically - the eldest-born son. This ancient custom caused the Tudors great problems in the following decades but Elizabeth of York gave birth to a healthy son, Arthur, in September 1486.

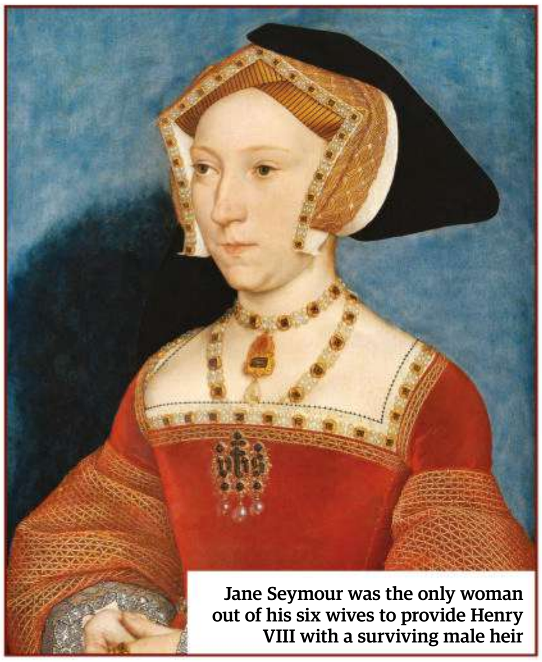
Arthur was proclaimed Prince of Wales while Henry and Elizabeth had six more children. This included two sons, Henry and Edmund, and three daughters; Margaret, Elizabeth and Mary. Margaret married King James IV of Scotland in 1503 and at the time this was seen as a relatively routine political marriage. However, the Scottish descendants of Margaret became increasingly important to the English succession.

In another political move, Henry arranged the marriage of Arthur to Catherine of Aragon in 1501. The youngest child of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile, Catherine played an important role in the early years of the Tudor dynasty.

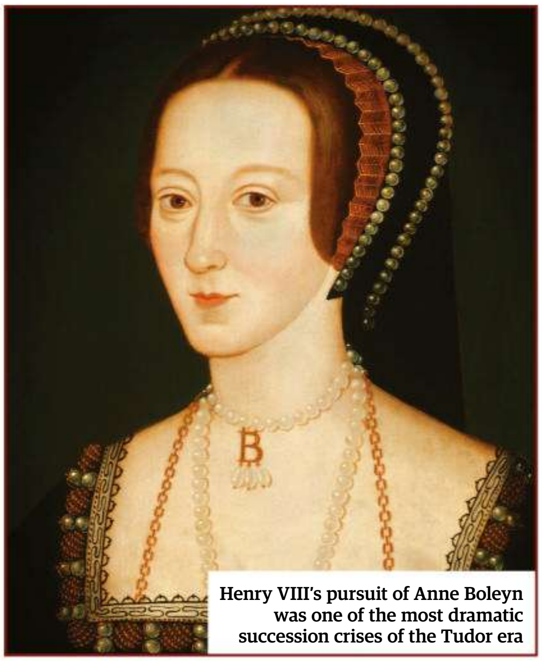
Her first marriage was short-lived when Arthur died aged 15 in 1502. His death was a devastating blow to



A pregnant Catherine of Aragon watches Henry VIII joust in an image dating from 1511



Jane Seymour was the only woman out of his six wives to provide Henry VIII with a surviving male heir



Henry VIII's pursuit of Anne Boleyn was one of the most dramatic succession crises of the Tudor era

Henry VII, who not only grieved as a father but also had to contend with the Tudors' first succession crisis. The King had another son, Henry, who replaced Arthur as heir but his youngest son, Edmund, had died in infancy in 1500.

Prince Henry was now Henry VII's only surviving son and the pressure to continue the dynasty became an intense responsibility for the teenage boy. In June 1503, Prince Henry was betrothed to his brother's widow, Catherine, in a special marriage that required a papal dispensation. Although then seen as a technicality, Catherine's previous marriage to Arthur would haunt the Tudor succession. But, at the time, Henry VII had secured the future of the dynasty.

HENRY AND CATHERINE

Henry VII died in 1509, having risen from almost total obscurity. It was now up to his heir, King Henry VIII, to continue his legacy by securing the succession. This meant siring children, particularly sons, and this endeavour dominated much of the new king's reign.

Henry VIII initially enjoyed a happy marriage to Catherine. Nevertheless, the couple also endured years of grief as the she gave birth to six children - of whom only one survived infancy.

Catherine sadly gave birth to two stillborn daughters and three sons. Of these boys, the first (Henry, Duke of Cornwall) died when he was two months old, while the other two died shortly after birth. Only Catherine's second daughter, Mary, survived infancy but Henry desired to have a healthy son.

As the years went by, Henry became increasingly anxious at the lack of a male heir. It was not just personally troubling but politically dangerous for him. There were still Yorkist claimants and the absence of a son made Henry appear weak among other European kings, who regarded him as the head of a relatively new dynasty. Consequently, Henry's marriage to

▶

King Henry VIII

ONE OF ENGLAND'S MOST INFAMOUS MONARCHS, HENRY WAS A RUTHLESS TYRANT

Pros

Highly intelligent, Henry was an author and composer and regarded as one of the most charismatic monarchs of his time.

Wales was unified with England during his reign under two Acts of Union in 1535 and 1542 that remain in place today.

The modern Royal Navy was founded during Henry's reign.

Cons

Infamously married six times, Henry ordered the execution of two of his wives: Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard.

Despite both being born as legitimate princesses, Henry declared two of his daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, as illegitimate.

By breaking with the Roman Catholic Church and establishing himself as head of the Church of England, Henry caused centuries of religious divisions in England between Catholics and Protestants.

A ruthless king, Henry ordered the executions of hundreds, if not thousands of people on charges that were often more imagined than real.

Despite receiving a large inheritance from his father and huge fortunes through taxes and dissolving the English monasteries, Henry was frequently on the verge of bankruptcy and twice devalued England's coinage.

Although he saw himself as a warrior, Henry fought costly and highly ineffective wars against France and Scotland.

© Alamy, Getty Images

Catherine became strained. In 1519, he sired a healthy – but ultimately illegitimate – son by one of his mistresses. He showered this boy with affection and dubbed him Henry FitzRoy, 1st Duke of Richmond and Somerset. Nevertheless, FitzRoy could never be king and during the 1520s, Henry fell in love with one of Catherine's ladies-in-waiting: Anne Boleyn.

THE 'GREAT MATTER'

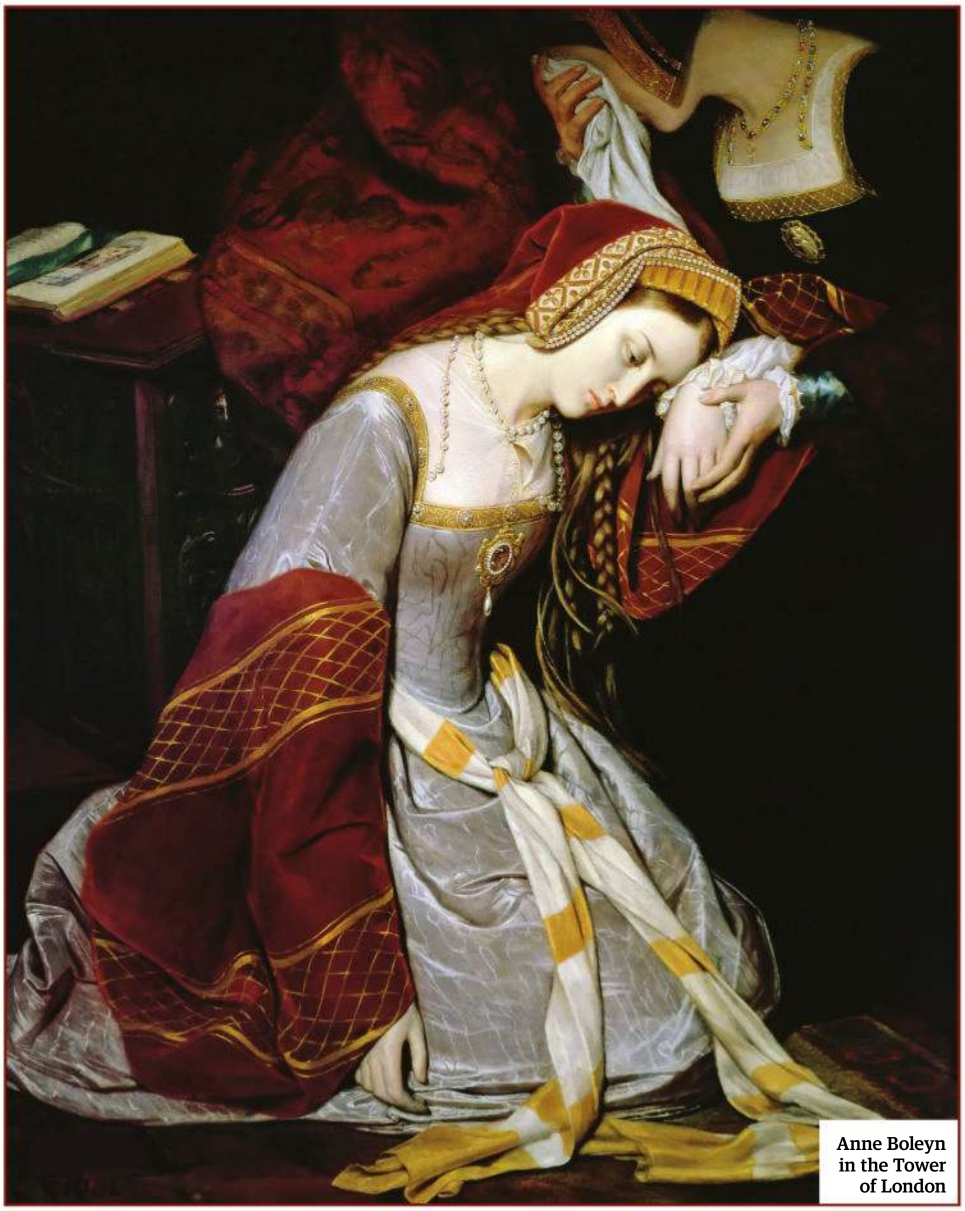
Henry's affair with Anne Boleyn had profound consequences for the Tudor succession. He became so besotted that he desired to annul his marriage to Catherine and marry Anne instead. This, he hoped, would result in the birth of a son but Henry needed permission from the Pope to divorce Catherine.

Henry's quest for a divorce became known as the 'King's Great Matter'. Henry forcefully used biblical references to imply that his marriage to Catherine was unlawful because he had committed the 'sinful' act of marrying his elder brother's widow. Catherine vigorously protested against the divorce and when the Pope refused to grant permission, Henry broke the English Church away from the Papacy. This crucial part of the English Reformation saw Henry appoint himself as head of the Church of England and he subsequently divorced Catherine. He also passed an act that made their daughter, Princess Mary, illegitimate and unable to inherit the throne. Henry married Anne in May 1533 and she gave birth to a healthy daughter, Elizabeth, in September 1533 but three more pregnancies resulted in miscarriages.

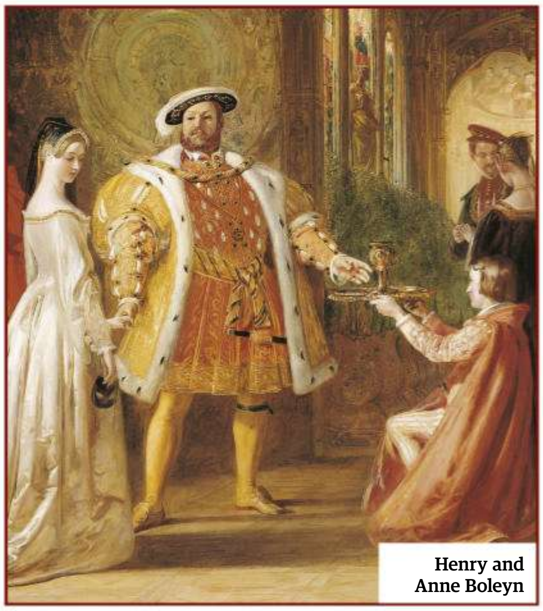
Despite the great efforts that had transformed England, Henry's marriage to Anne had still not resulted in the birth of a son. In a repeat of how he had treated Catherine, Henry's eyes once again began to wander as he thought of how he could end his marriage to Anne. One of her ladies-in-waiting, Jane Seymour, became Henry's mistress and – in a ruthless act – Henry had Anne arrested and tried on salacious charges of treason.

Convicted of the charges (which were almost certainly false), Anne was executed at the Tower of London in May 1536. Like Princess Mary before her, Anne's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, was also declared illegitimate and disinherited by Henry, who proceeded to marry Jane Seymour. Proclaimed queen in June 1536, Jane finally achieved what Henry desired in October 1537, when she gave birth to a healthy son called Edward. Henry was overjoyed that the succession was finally secured. However, Prince Edward's birth came at a personal price when Jane died 12 days later from labour complications. The King was devastated and although he would marry three more times, he had no more children.

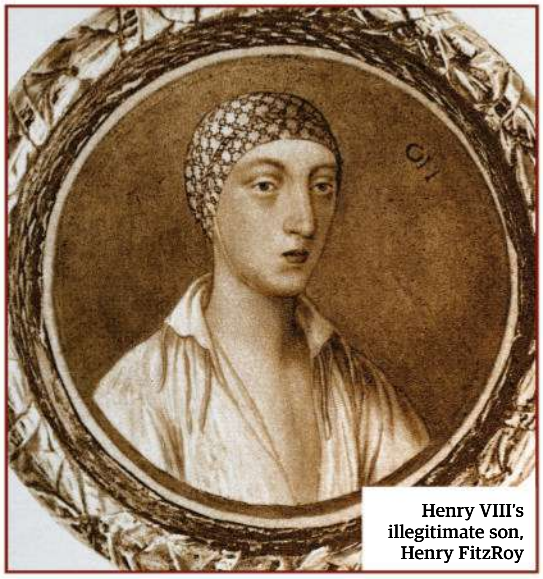
It had taken Henry VIII almost 30 years, and bloodthirsty turmoil, to produce a male heir but for the rest of his reign it was assumed that the Tudor dynasty would continue. Prince Edward was a healthy, intelligent boy and when Henry died in 1547, he succeeded to the throne as King Edward VI.



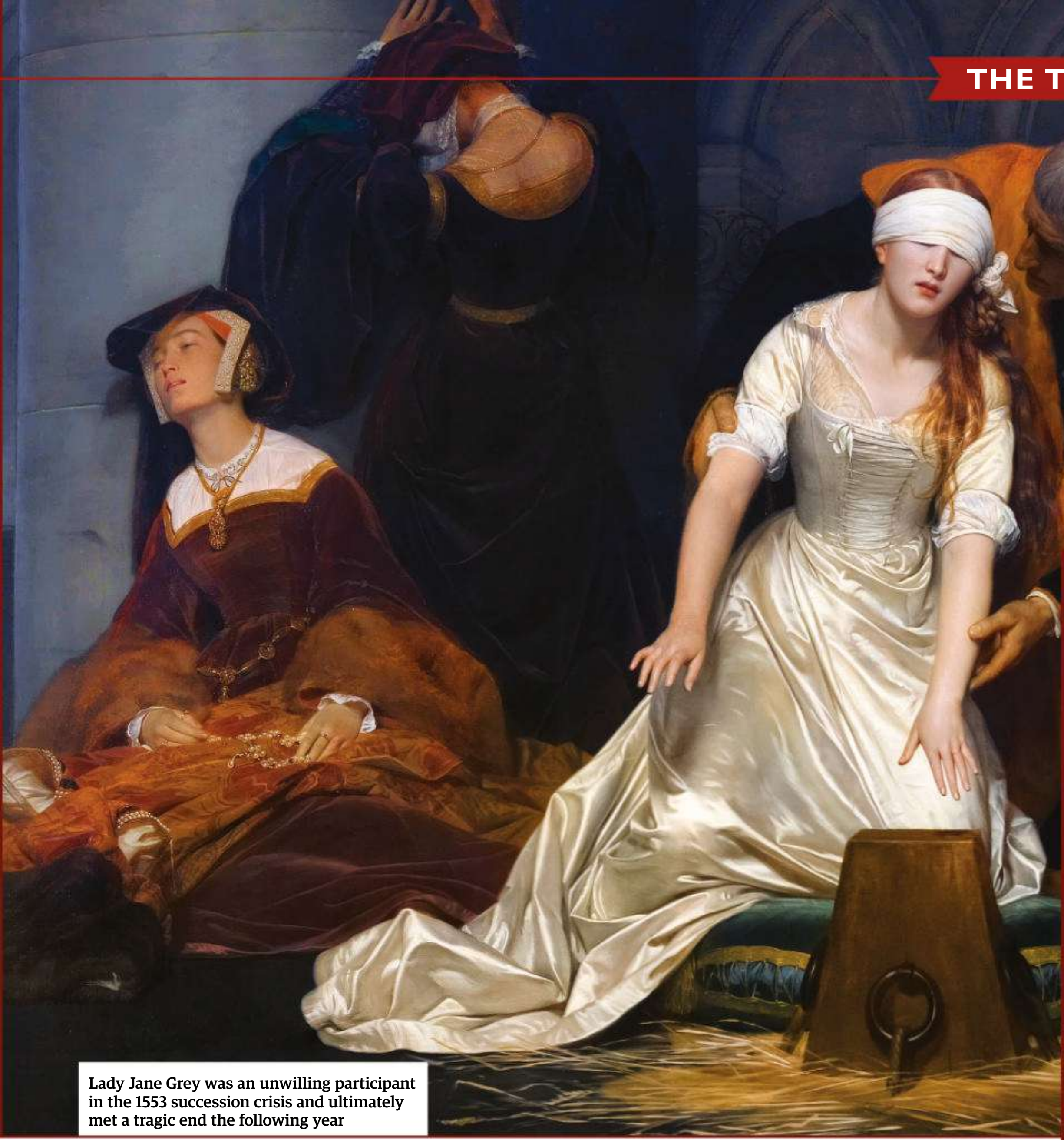
Anne Boleyn in the Tower of London



Henry and Anne Boleyn



Henry VIII's illegitimate son, Henry FitzRoy



Lady Jane Grey was an unwilling participant in the 1553 succession crisis and ultimately met a tragic end the following year

EDWARD'S 'DEVISE'

Such were Henry VIII's hopes for his son's succession that he had gone to war with Scotland before his death to force the northern kingdom into a marriage alliance between Edward and the infant Mary, Queen of Scots, who was the granddaughter of Margaret Tudor. The Scottish Parliament refused the match and the war that followed became known as 'The Rough Wooing'. This conflict lasted until 1551, although it did not result in a marriage between Edward and Mary.

Edward VI succeeded to the throne aged nine and for most of his reign the boy king was physically healthy. He was also an ardent Protestant who constantly upbraided his older, Catholic half-sister, Mary, for her faith. However, in February 1553 Edward fell ill and by June of that year he was mortally ill.

Although gravely sick, still a minor and under the protectorship of John Dudley, 1st Duke of Northumberland, Edward took decisive steps to alter the course of the succession. Despite both of his elder half-sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, still being alive, Edward had no intention of allowing them to succeed him. This was because both were female (at a time when England had never had a legitimately crowned queen) and still considered illegitimate in Edward's eyes - despite Henry VIII restoring them to the succession in 1543. Edward also objected to Mary succeeding on religious grounds.

Instead, the King drafted a document called 'My Devise for the Succession' where he named Lady Jane Grey, the daughter-in-law of Northumberland, as his heir. Northumberland was a powerful politician who may have influenced Edward's choice but the final decision ultimately belonged to the monarch.

In Edward's view, Jane was a suitable choice because she was a great-granddaughter of Henry VII and - perhaps most importantly - was a devout Protestant. When Edward died aged just 15 in July 1553, Jane was proclaimed as queen four days later. This technically ended the Tudor dynasty but Mary immediately launched her own campaign to succeed her half-brother.

'JANE THE QUENE'

Mary gathered an army and marched on London. Jane only 'ruled' England for nine days but this was tempered by the fact that she spent it in the Tower of London as a virtual prisoner of Northumberland and the Privy Council. Although she had been proclaimed queen, Jane never wanted to be monarch and refused

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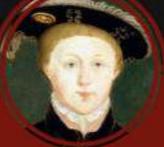

King Edward VI

AN INTELLIGENT BUT COLD-HEARTED BOY, EDWARD'S BRIEF REIGN WITNESSED THE TRANSFORMATION OF ENGLAND INTO A PROTESTANT KINGDOM

Pros

Despite his youth, Edward was known for his maturity, intelligence and regal bearing.

During his reign, the Book of Common Prayer was introduced into English churches with many of its words and phrases still being used in common parlance.

Edward kept a 'Journal' (diary) as king, which remains a unique primary source from his reign.

Cons

Edward had a cold personality and could have a violent temper. Had he lived, he may have grown up into a tyrant.

A fervent Protestant, Edward accelerated the English Reformation, which deepened the religious divide in England.

During Edward's reign, thousands of his subjects were killed during two rebellions against religious and land reforms.

Edward's deliberate attempts to prevent his half-sisters' succeeding to the throne caused political instability after his death.

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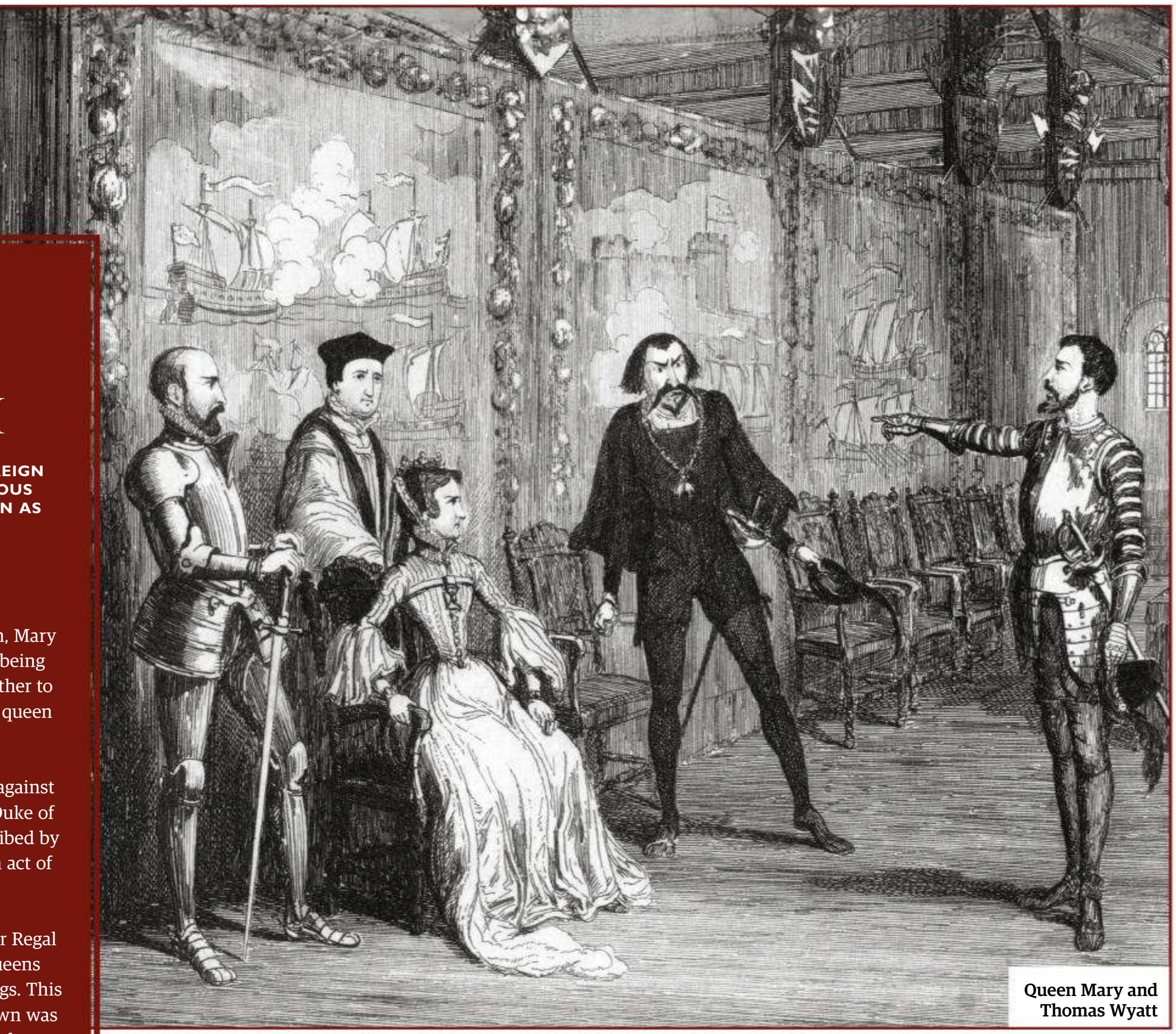


Queen Mary and Thomas Wyatt

to wear the crown. On 19 July, the Privy Council acquiesced to Mary's demands and proclaimed her queen instead. Jane remained imprisoned in the Tower while Mary triumphantly entered London with Princess Elizabeth in August 1553.

Northumberland's power was broken and he was executed while Jane remained in the Tower. Despite her impressive victory, and being crowned as the first sovereign queen of England, Mary's rule was not as secure as it appeared. Aged 37, she had never married or had children. If she remained unmarried, her most likely heir would be her younger half-sister Elizabeth, but Mary did not want this to happen.

Elizabeth was Anne Boleyn's daughter, the woman who had caused Mary's father to divorce her mother, Catherine of Aragon, and resulted in her own proclaimed (though false) illegitimacy. Anne had also encouraged the rise of Protestantism in England, with Elizabeth being a Protestant herself. As a devout Catholic who forcefully attempted to restore Catholicism in England, Mary was determined that the Protestant daughter of her hated stepmother would not become queen.

Mary aimed to marry as soon as possible and it was negotiated with the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V that she would marry his son, Philip. The heir to the Spanish throne, Philip was a Catholic and his religion concerned many English nobles and Parliament. Some were Protestants who feared that they would not be able to worship freely, while others did not want the Queen's consort to be a powerful foreign prince.

These concerns erupted into the rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt the Younger in early 1554. Wyatt planned to replace Mary with Elizabeth but his rebellion was defeated. Wyatt was executed, along with another conspirator, Henry Grey, 1st Duke of Suffolk, who was the father of Lady Jane Grey. Suffolk's involvement led to the execution of Jane (aged only 16 or 17) in February 1554, despite her having played no part in the rebellion.

Elizabeth had similarly not participated in Wyatt's Rebellion but, as she was the focus of the conspiracy, Mary implicitly mistrusted her. Imprisoned in the Tower of London, Elizabeth maintained her innocence until she was released and kept under house arrest.

MARY AND PHILIP

The rebellion spurred Mary on to marry Philip, which she did in July 1554. Although she loved Philip, her feelings were not reciprocated. This did not bode well for bearing children, although Mary believed herself to be pregnant within months of the wedding. In April

Queen Mary I

ENGLAND'S FIRST SOVEREIGN QUEEN WAS COURAGEOUS BUT CAME TO BE KNOWN AS 'BLOODY MARY'

Pros

A brave, resourceful woman, Mary survived the ignominy of being made illegitimate by her father to become the first sovereign queen of England.

Her securing of the crown against Edward VI's regent, John, Duke of Northumberland, was described by one of her supporters as an act of "Herculean daring".

During her reign, the Act for Regal Power established that queens were just as powerful as kings. This meant that the English Crown was no longer defined by gender.

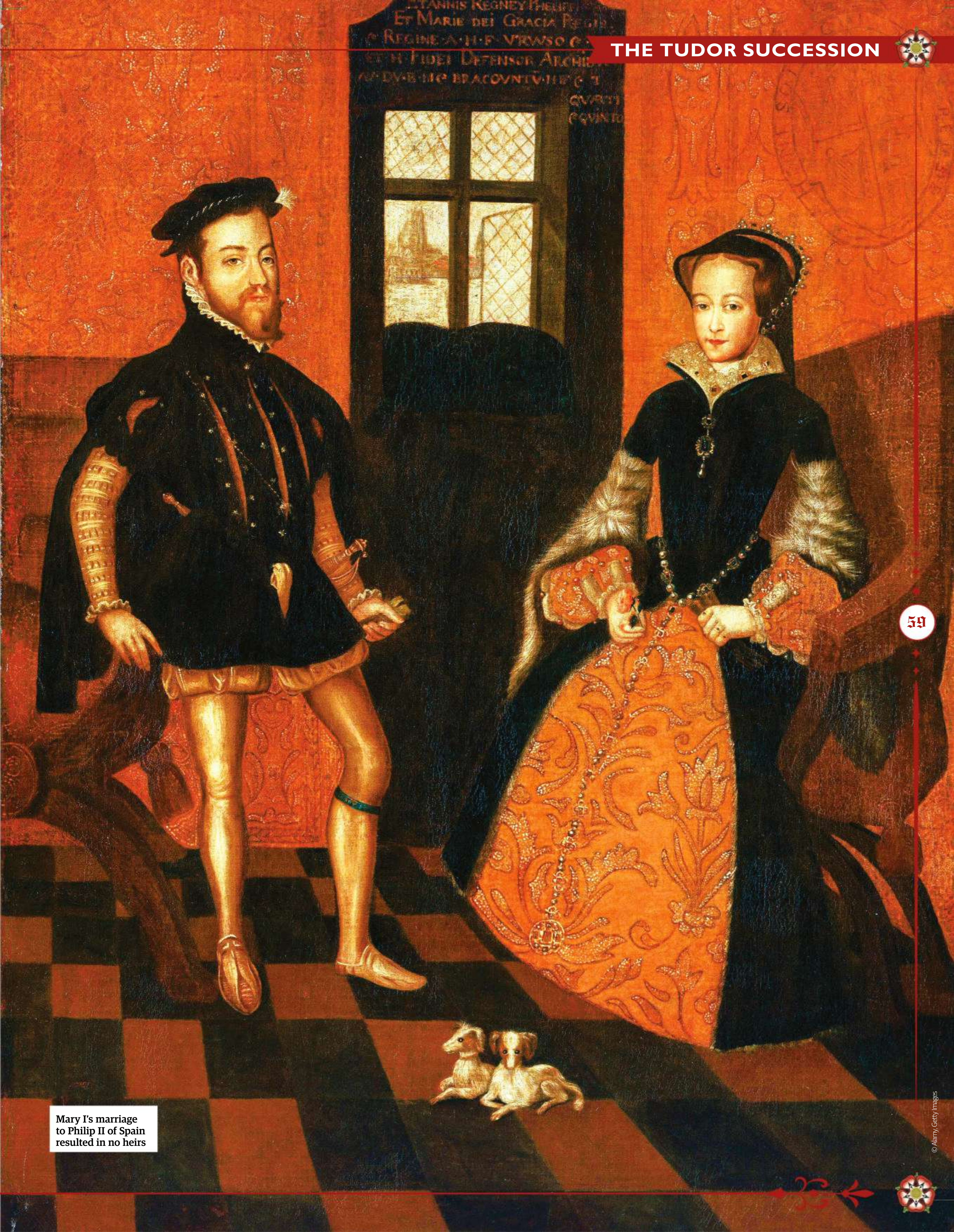
Mary's government passed various reforms and expanded England's international trade, including with Russia.

Cons

A devout Catholic, Mary attempted to reverse the English Reformation with harsh heresy laws. She became known as 'Bloody Mary' due to the executions of hundreds of Protestants during her reign.

Many of the Protestants executed during her reign died by being burned at the stake. Mary was consequently perceived as having a vindictive nature.

In 1558, England lost Calais, its last continental foothold in France. The port had been held by the English since 1347 and its loss was considered a great humiliation.



Mary I's marriage to Philip II of Spain resulted in no heirs

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1555, Mary took to her bedchamber believing that she would imminently give birth, but it was a false pregnancy.

When Philip was made king of Spain in 1556, he became a mostly absent husband. Mary endured another false pregnancy after a brief visit from Philip in 1557 and it became obvious that she would have no children. Under these circumstances, Mary reluctantly accepted Elizabeth as her successor. However, such was Mary's antipathy towards her half-sister that she only officially recognised her as heir 11 days before she died in November 1558.

"BOUND TO ENGLAND"

Aged 25 when she became queen, Elizabeth was the last surviving Tudor from her immediate family. She was also unmarried and her councillors put constant pressure on her to marry and secure the succession. However, despite many proposals and male favourites, she refused to marry throughout her long reign.

Known to history as the 'Virgin Queen', Elizabeth's refusal to marry remains one of the most famous facts about her but also the most puzzling. She said she would not marry because she was, "already bound to a husband which is the Kingdom of England". However, to not marry was dangerous.

England had a long-established Parliament but it was far from the sovereign, governing body that it is today. Instead, power rested in Elizabeth with assistance from her Privy Councillors. They were acutely aware that marriage and producing an heir would secure not just the continuation of the dynasty but also provide stability at home and abroad. To not marry would encourage hostile intervention to replace Elizabeth, particularly from her Catholic brother-in-law, Philip II of Spain, who disagreed with the Protestant English state that had been established in the late 1550s. Nevertheless, despite seriously considering marrying her favourite, Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester, and the French prince Francis, Duke of Anjou, Elizabeth remained single. It appears she made this decision early in life. She may have been influenced by the numerous wives who had fallen foul of her father, Henry VIII, most notably her mother, Anne Boleyn. Although singledom couldn't produce an heir, it did provide security as Elizabeth declared to Parliament in 1559, "Assuredly, if my successor were known to the world, I would never esteem my state to be safe".

Nevertheless, the Privy Council exerted such pressure on Elizabeth that she refused to allow the succession to be discussed. However, there was an heir apparent in Scotland…

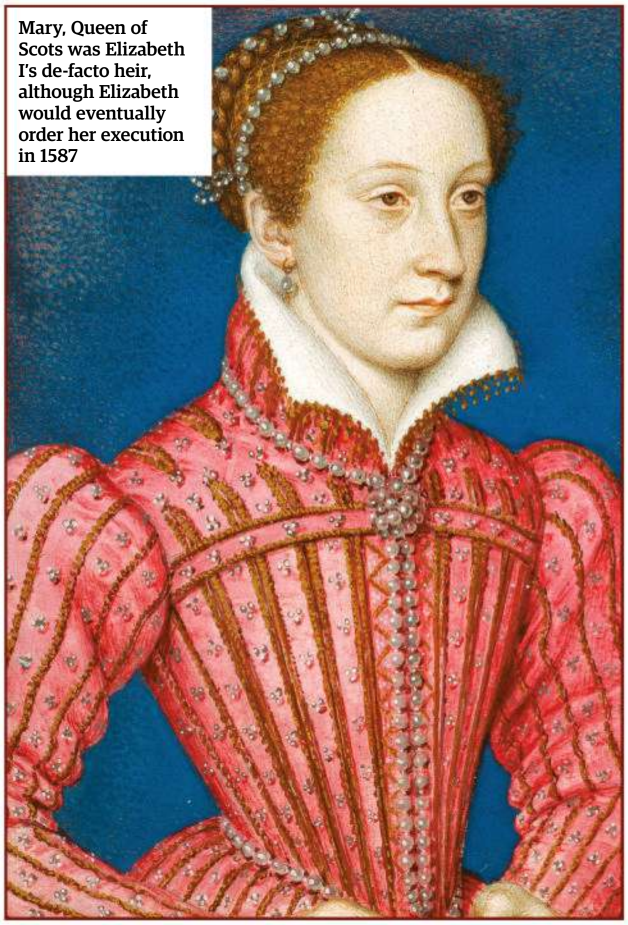
MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

Mary was not just the sovereign queen of Scots but had grown up to briefly become queen consort of France. She personally ruled Scotland from 1561 but as Elizabeth's cousin she was also heir to the English throne through her great-grandfather, Henry VII. If Elizabeth died childless then Mary would unite the English and Scottish crowns. With this pedigree she was a powerful rival to Elizabeth, who refused to publicly acknowledge her as heir.

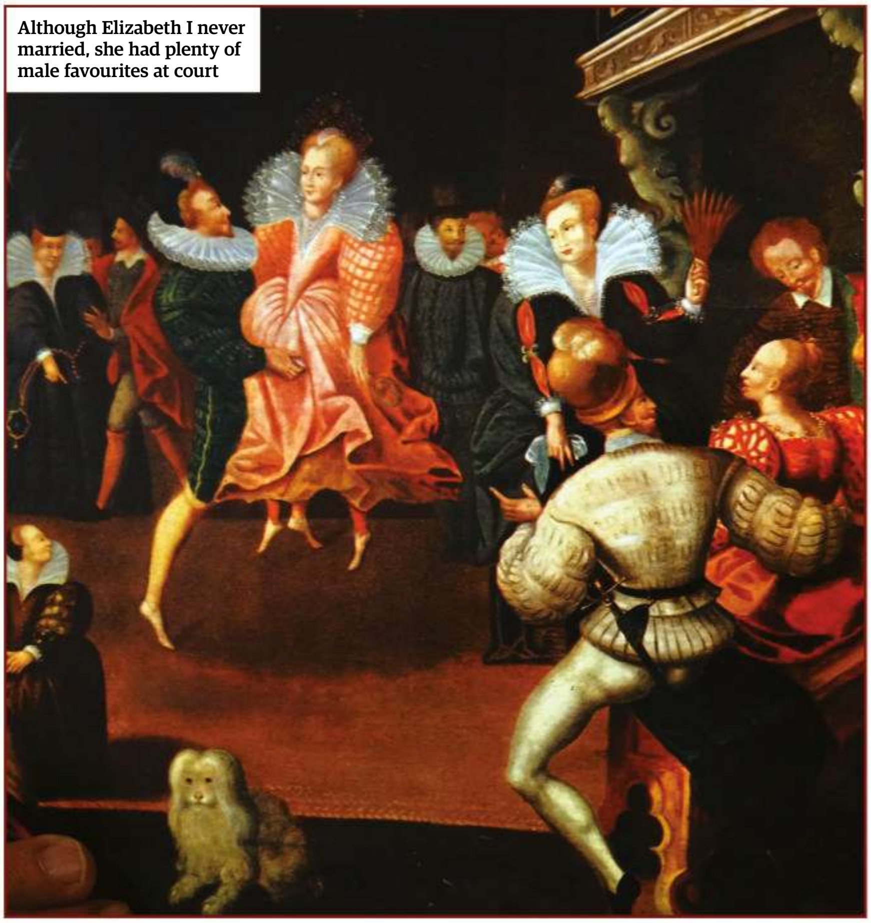
Complicating matters was that Mary was a devout Catholic, whereas both Scotland and England had officially turned Protestant. This made Mary unpopular among her nobles and she also made a mistake in marrying her cousin, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley. Himself a descendent of Margaret Tudor, Darnley was also a violent drunkard. Although the couple produced a male heir called James, the marriage fell apart with Darnley being murdered in mysterious circumstances in 1567.

Mary was widely rumoured to have been involved in Darnley's murder and after a brief civil war, she fled to England in 1568. Expecting royal favour from Elizabeth to restore her to her throne, Mary was instead imprisoned by Elizabeth for the next 18 years. Knowing that Mary was effectively her heir, Elizabeth also knew that she was a dangerous figurehead for disaffected English Catholics, so imprisonment was the safest option for state and personal security.

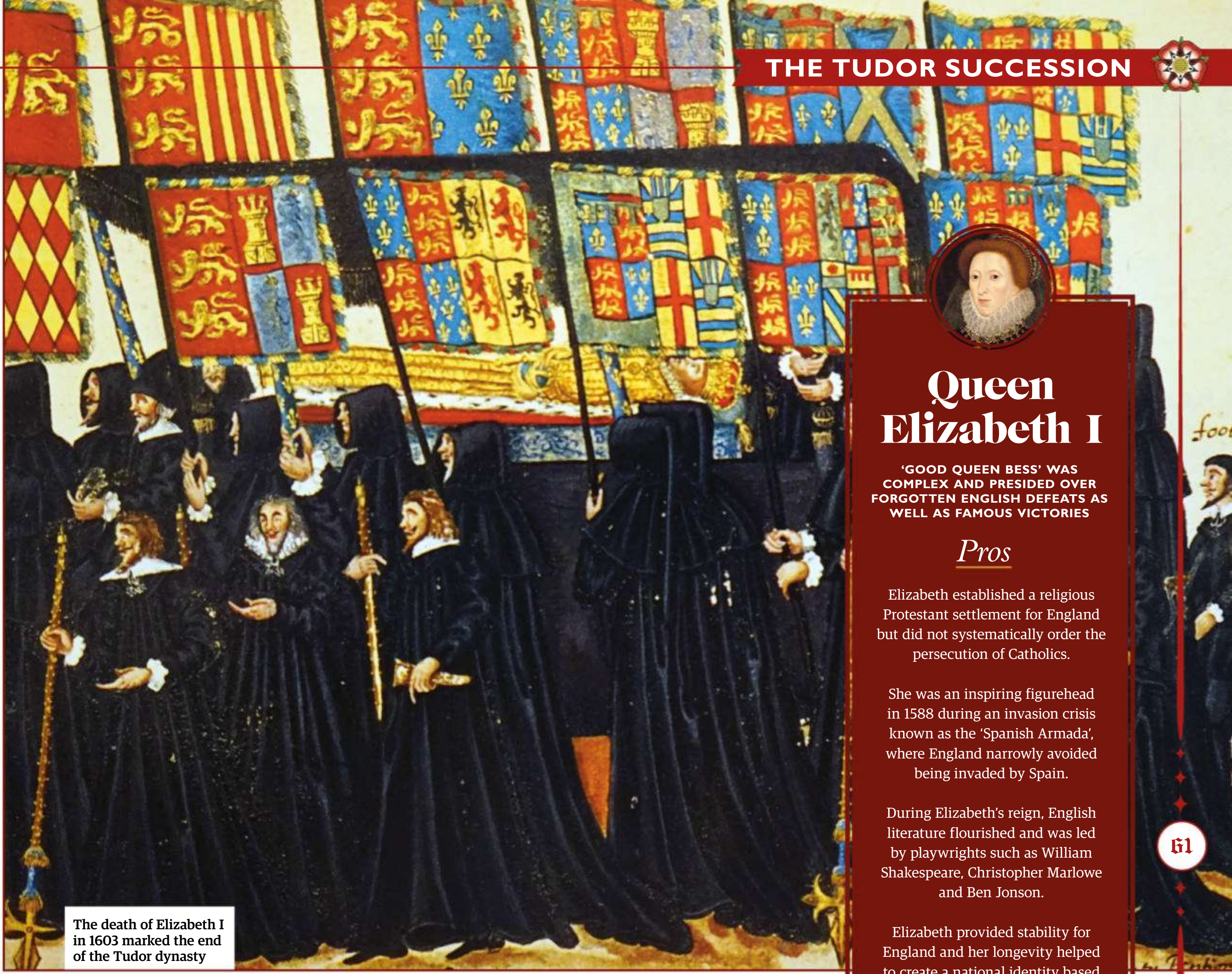
While the infant James became King James VI, Mary lived under house arrest in various English castles and manors. As predicted, she



Mary, Queen of Scots was Elizabeth I's de-facto heir, although Elizabeth would eventually order her execution in 1587



Although Elizabeth I never married, she had plenty of male favourites at court



The death of Elizabeth I in 1603 marked the end of the Tudor dynasty

also became the focus of several Catholic plots. Mary was eventually implicated in the Babington Plot of 1586 that aimed to free her and depose Elizabeth. The conspiracy was a partial sting operation conducted by Elizabeth's spymaster to entrap Mary. It revealed that the Scottish Queen consented to Elizabeth's assassination, with Mary being found guilty and sentenced to death.

Despite the conviction, Elizabeth found herself unwilling to order the execution of a fellow monarch and so refused to sign Mary's death warrant for weeks. Nevertheless, the Privy Council was absolutely determined to avoid a Catholic succession and so Elizabeth eventually gave in and signed the warrant in February 1587. Mary was beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle seven days later.

RISE OF THE STUARTS

Mary's execution was a short-term political crisis for Elizabeth but it perversely helped the succession. James VI was now the unofficial heir and, in the eyes of the Privy Council, was more suitable because he was a Protestant. Although Elizabeth refused to name him as her successor, her councillors corresponded with James in order to ensure a smooth succession when the time came.

After a 45-year reign, Elizabeth died in March 1603. Even in the last few weeks of her life, she refused to recognise James as heir. However, in her last letter to him, she addressed him as "my very good brother", which was perhaps a tacit acceptance. Nevertheless, the Privy Council quickly paved the way for James's accession and he was proclaimed as King James I of England on the day Elizabeth died.

Elizabeth's death marked the end of the Tudors and the succession of James's Stuart dynasty that unified the kingdoms of England and Scotland. During 118 years, the Tudors had risen from Anglo-Welsh obscurity to become a famous dynasty. However, the issue of succession marked their rule and they never shook off their weakness in producing heirs.

Henry VII had aimed to establish a dynasty that would last for centuries but it ended with his last surviving granddaughter. In fact, it is only through Henry VII that the Tudors live on. Today's King Charles III is a direct descendent of Henry VII through Margaret Tudor and her Stuart descendents, including James VI and I. Charles is king of the United Kingdom rather than England and Scotland, and for that he can ultimately thank Henry VII. By marrying Margaret to James IV of Scotland, Henry set in motion the series of events that would ultimately unify Great Britain.

Queen Elizabeth I

'GOOD QUEEN BESS' WAS COMPLEX AND PRESIDED OVER FORGOTTEN ENGLISH DEFEATS AS WELL AS FAMOUS VICTORIES

Pros

Elizabeth established a religious Protestant settlement for England but did not systematically order the persecution of Catholics.

She was an inspiring figurehead in 1588 during an invasion crisis known as the 'Spanish Armada', where England narrowly avoided being invaded by Spain.

During Elizabeth's reign, English literature flourished and was led by playwrights such as William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson.

Elizabeth provided stability for England and her longevity helped to create a national identity based around the Queen as 'Gloriana'.

Cons

Elizabeth had a short temper and could be indecisive as a ruler.

Her refusal to marry resulted in decades of political uncertainty about the future of the kingdom.

The treatment and execution of Mary, Queen of Scots left a stain on Elizabeth's political record.

In 1589, the 'English Armada' against Spain was a disastrous defeat that caused the death of tens of thousands of English soldiers and sailors.

Elizabeth's armed forces conducted a vicious war in Ireland during 1593-1603 that may have resulted in the deaths of over 100,000 people.

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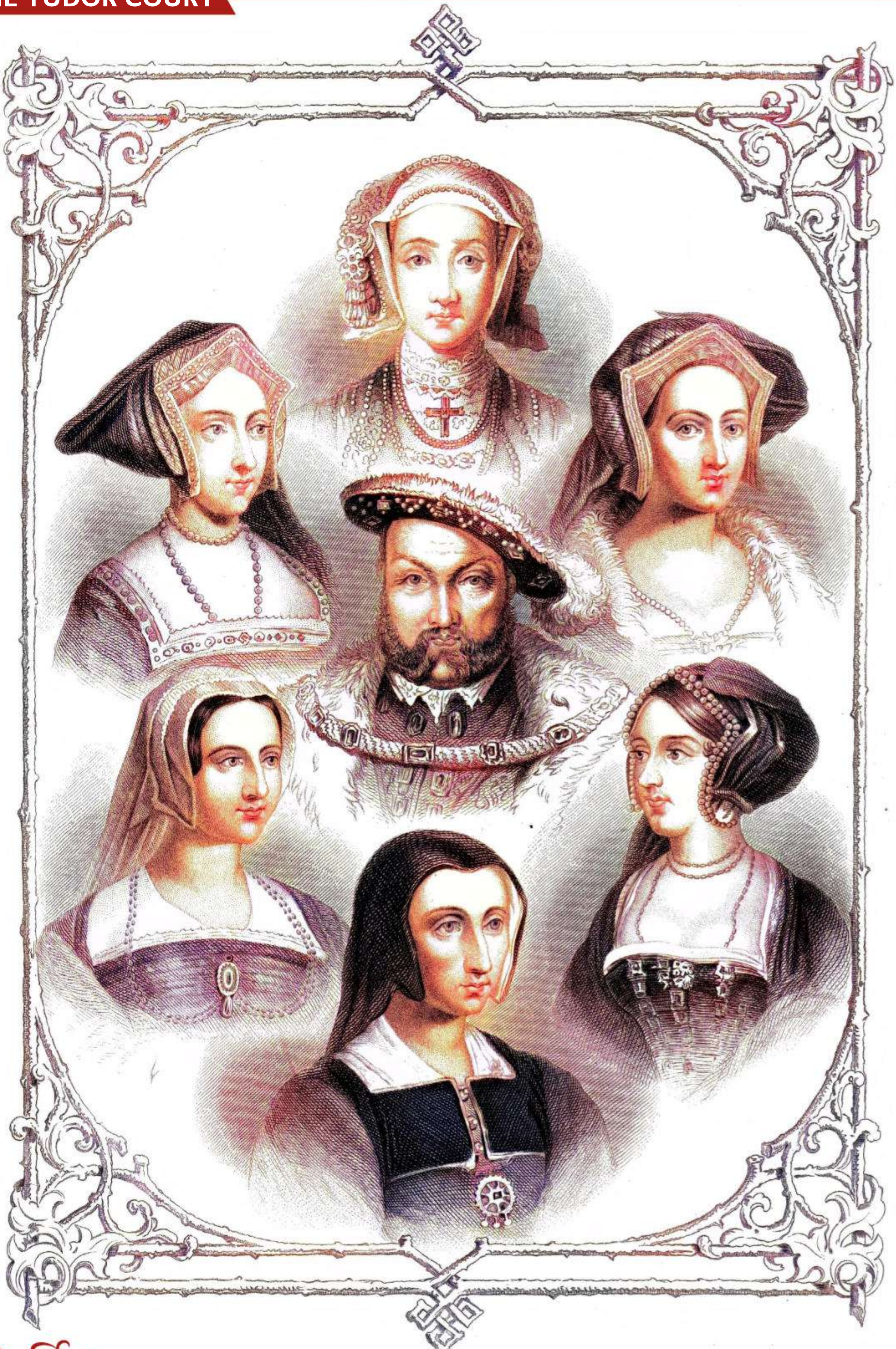


THE TUDOR QUEEN CONSORTS

A look at the reigns of Henry VIII's six wives and what they each prioritised as queens of England

WRITTEN BY EMILY STANIFORTH

Famous for being married to England's notorious love rat of a king, it is hard not to have heard of the six wives of Henry VIII. We know them as a list of names, immortalised in the rhyme: "Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived." But what else did these women do during their lives, before they left Henry's orbit? Each of Henry's wives reigned as queen consort of England during their marriages, even if only for a short while. As influential Tudor women, they certainly deserve to be remembered as more than a footnote in the reign of a tyrant. So, who were the six Tudor queen consorts, and what did they achieve?

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

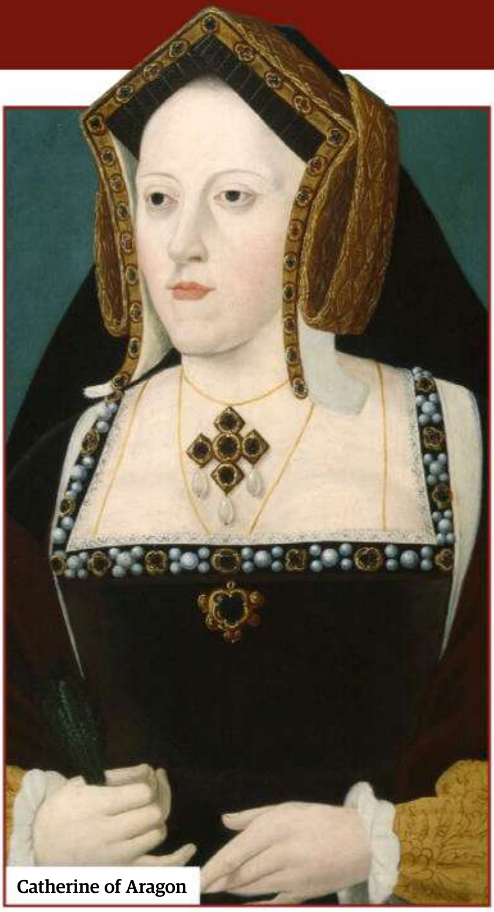
1485-1536

A princess from birth, Catherine of Aragon was born into a life of prominence. Her parents, King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile, ensured she was given a thorough education in subjects ranging from literature to arithmetic during her childhood in Spain. She was also brought up in the Catholic faith, and religion continued to play a huge part in Catherine's life. Having been betrothed to Arthur Tudor, the son of Henry VII and older brother of the future Henry VIII, from when she was young, Catherine was sent to England as a teenager to embark on her new life as the future queen of England.

Arthur's sudden death, after only a few months of marriage, did not put a stop to Catherine's journey to becoming the English queen. She subsequently married Arthur's brother Henry, just after he ascended to the throne, and was crowned queen in a joint coronation ceremony with her new husband the day after their wedding.

As queen, Catherine actively participated in England's affairs. She was valued by her husband, who entrusted her with acting as regent while he was off fighting battles abroad. One of the most famous and impressive episodes of Catherine's regency came in September 1513, when James IV led his Scottish forces over the border and into England. As acting captain general of the English army, Catherine mobilised the English troops and achieved victory at the Battle of Flodden in Northumberland. King James was slain on the battlefield and Catherine had kept England's borders safe. As a token of her success, Catherine sent James's bloodied coat to France where Henry was fighting.

Away from the battlefield, Catherine also played a role in carving out the intellectual landscape of Tudor England, acting as a patron for Renaissance humanists like Desiderius Erasmus. Having benefited from a wide-ranging and extensive education herself, it is not surprising that Catherine's educational interests would continue into her later life. In arranging for the education of her only child, Princess Mary (later Mary I), she hired the humanist scholar Juan Luis Vives, who wrote the influential *The Education of a Christian Woman*, which he dedicated to Catherine.


Catherine of Aragon

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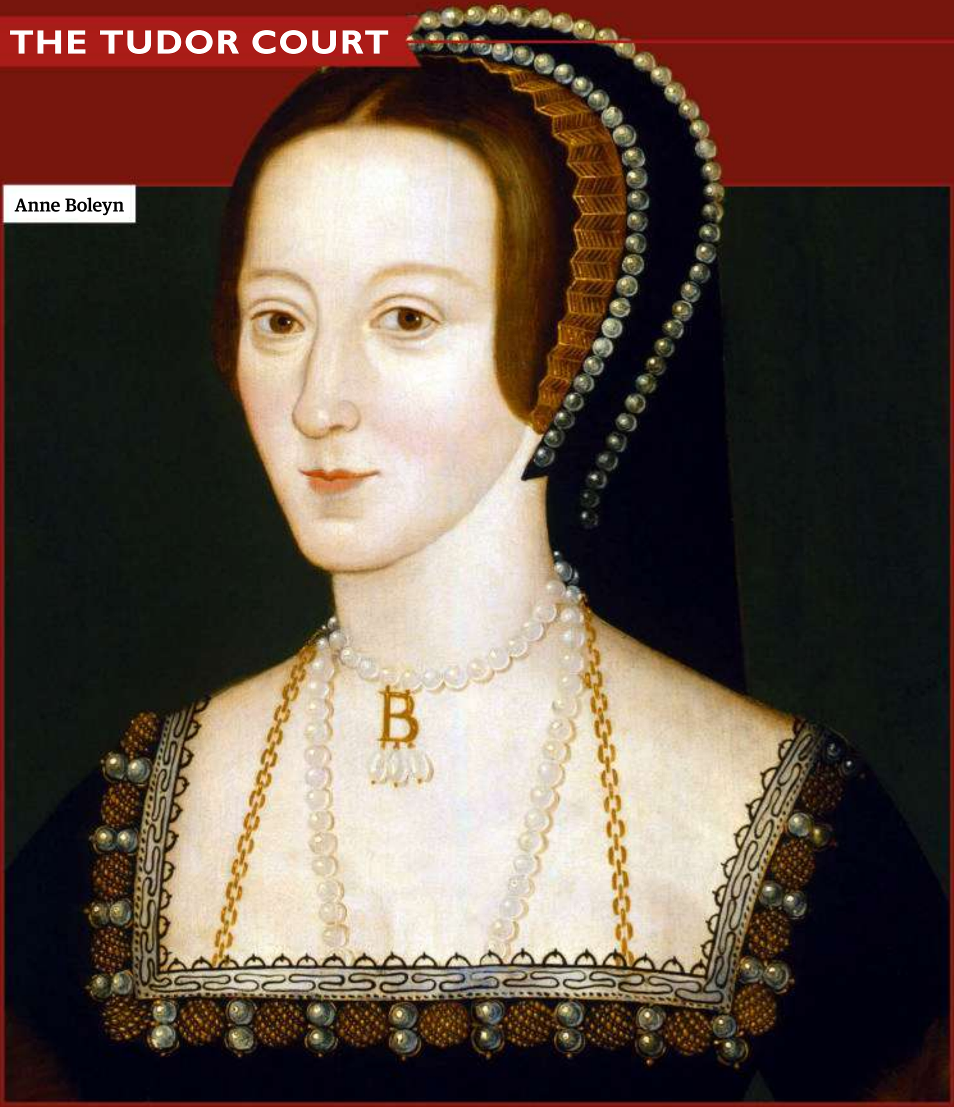

Anne Boleyn

ANNE BOLEYN

c.1501-1536

Of all Henry's wives, Anne Boleyn is probably the most famous. Remembered by history as the woman who seduced King Henry into leaving his long-suffering first wife of 23 years and inspiring the break with Rome, Anne's legacy is one of scandal and impropriety. She was the first of Henry's wives to be executed after being charged with adultery. However, Anne's infamous legacy as the beheaded queen does not do her achievements justice.

Anne Boleyn was a smart and capable woman in her own right before she ever met Henry. Educated alongside her brother and sister, Anne's teaching was not confined to the domestic and courtly arts. She spent several years of her later childhood at the courts of Queen Margaret of Austria in the Low Countries (the Netherlands) and subsequently the French Queen Claude. Here, Anne thrived in an environment where she had access to some of the greatest European minds and studied literature, art and music.

Anne left the French court in 1522, and travelled back to England where she caught the eye of the King, who at this point was becoming desperate for a son and heir. Anne's European education and upbringing attracted many admirers at the English court, but it was Henry who eventually managed to win her hand. After annulling his marriage to Catherine and breaking from the Catholic Church when the Pope refused to grant him a divorce, Anne was made queen in 1533 shortly after their marriage.

Despite having been raised in the Catholic faith, Anne's exposure to the ideas of Protestant reformers in Europe led her to advocate for religious reform in the Church of England, which had been established in order for Henry to be able to divorce Catherine and marry Anne.

Though little is actually known of her activities, it is believed that she championed Lutheran reform, and privately read Lutheran materials. She is also believed to have been involved with drafting poverty reforms, which would eventually be used as the basis for Thomas Cromwell's Poor Law bill. Anne's original reforms were also featured in the Poor Law, which would later be drawn up by her daughter, Elizabeth I.

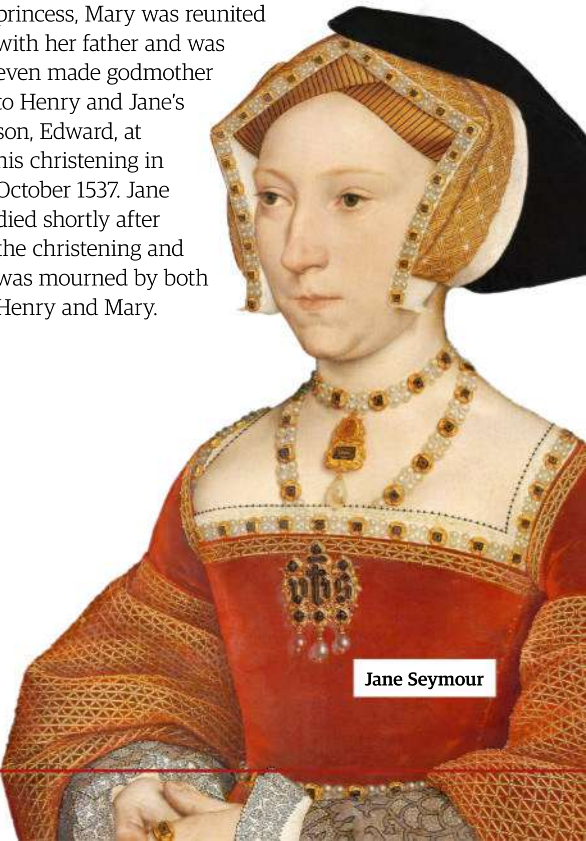
JANE SEYMOUR

c.1508-1537

Henry married Jane Seymour just 11 days after the execution of Anne Boleyn. Jane had held a position as a lady-in-waiting to Anne, which is where she caught the attention of Henry's wandering eye. She had also served as a lady-in-waiting for Catherine of Aragon. Unlike the first two of Henry's wives, Jane had a modest upbringing with very little intellectual education. Instead, she had been taught to excel in domestic tasks - like the majority of women during the Tudor period. Historians are often confused as to the nature of Jane's appeal to a king who had been married to two extremely headstrong wives previously. Yet, it was Jane who is believed to have been the great love of Henry's life, and the only wife who gave him the son and heir he longed for. Whether Henry's affection for his wife would have waned with time is impossible to tell, as Jane died in childbirth only a year into their marriage.

During her short time as queen, Jane fought hard for the things that mattered most to her. Her involvement in politics and religion was seen in the appeals she purportedly made to Henry to obtain pardons for some of the rebels captured during the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. She is also said to have appealed to her husband to stop the dissolution of at least one convent. However, she was unsuccessful and does not appear to have inserted herself into political matters again.

As stepmother to Henry's first daughter, Mary, Jane made an effort to bring Mary back into the royal family after she had been declared illegitimate by her father following her parents' divorce. Thanks in part to Jane's sympathy towards the young princess, Mary was reunited with her father and was even made godmother to Henry and Jane's son, Edward, at his christening in October 1537. Jane died shortly after the christening and was mourned by both Henry and Mary.


Jane Seymour

ANNE OF CLEVES

1515-1557

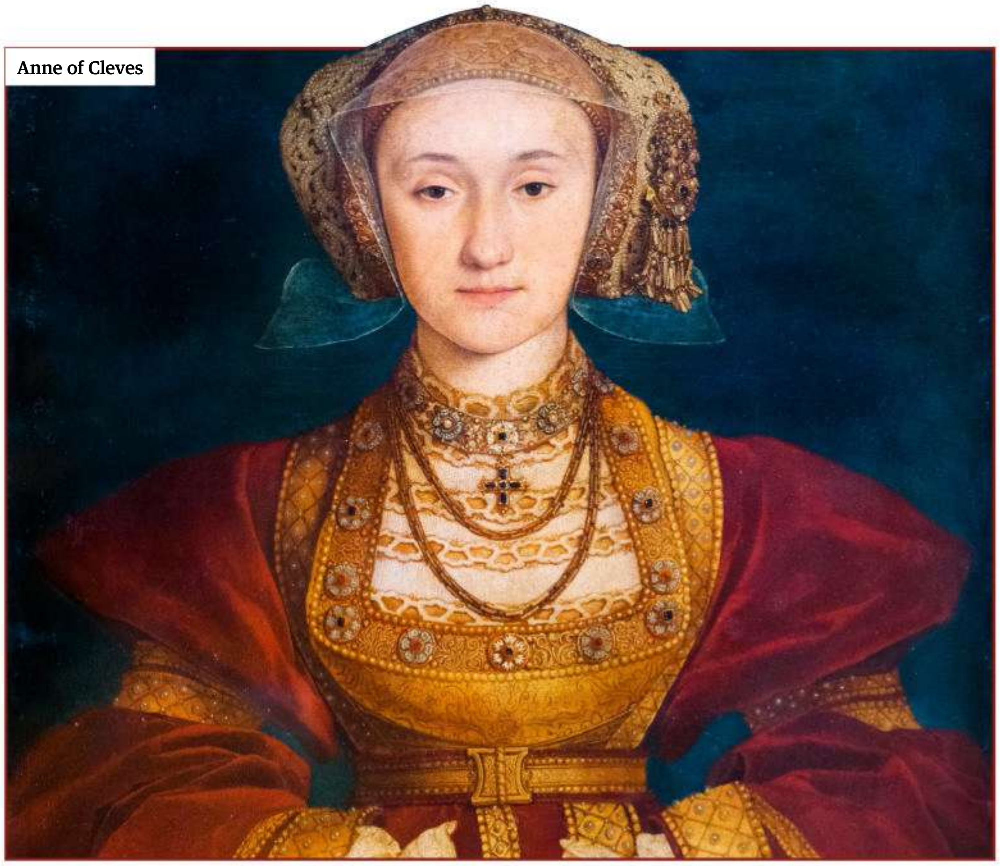
The story of Anne of Cleves and her first unfortunate encounter with Henry VIII set the scene for their brief and unsuccessful marriage. Henry, who had only ever seen a painting of Anne by Hans Holbein, decided to meet her in disguise when she arrived in England from the Holy Roman Empire (Germany). Anne, who did not recognise the King in disguise, was disgusted by the strange man who tried to kiss her and pushed him away. Henry was mortified by the event, and the relationship between the two only worsened from that point.

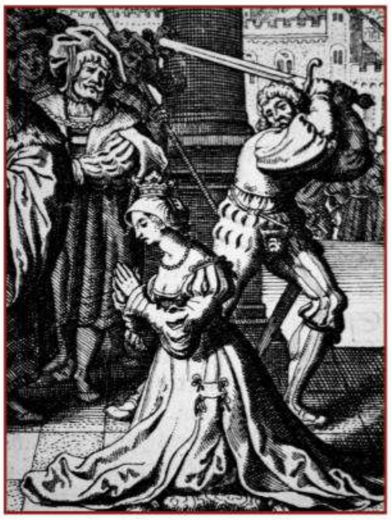
Henry was disappointed by Anne's appearance, with her later becoming unkindly nicknamed in England as the "Flanders Mare". After their wedding in January 1540, Henry claimed that they had not been able to consummate the marriage. An annulment was sought by Henry, to which Anne agreed. By July of that year they were no longer husband and wife.

Despite her short time as Henry's wife and consort (she was never even formally crowned), Anne was financially rewarded for her troubles. On the condition that she did not return to the Holy Roman Empire and stayed in England, she was provided with an income and was given Richmond Palace and Hever Castle, among other properties. Anne lived a life of luxury, enjoying hobbies and the privileges that came from being held up as one of the most important ladies in England after the King's wife and daughters. She was a truly independent woman, which was almost unheard of at the time.

She never married again but surprisingly formed a close friendship with Henry that endured until his death. They fondly referred to each other as "brother" and "sister", and Anne continued to play a role in the lives of all three of her former stepchildren. She frequently visited the children, and mentioned both Mary and Elizabeth in her will. Her last appearance in public was at the coronation of Mary I in 1553, where she rode alongside Elizabeth, highlighting the position in which she was still held by the Tudors, despite having been married to the King for only six months over ten years before. Anne was the last of Henry's wives to die, passing away in 1557.

> *"Anne was a truly independent woman, which was almost unheard of at the time"*


Anne of Cleves



"Off with her head!"

WHY DID HENRY VIII EXECUTE TWO OF HIS WIVES?

When you look at it numerically, a third of Henry VIII's wives were executed. Both Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, who were also first cousins, were executed at the Tower of London after Henry decided to be rid of them.

Anne's execution came after a trial that saw her accused of adultery and incest (with her brother, George Boleyn, who was also executed as a result of Anne's downfall). However, Anne never admitted to any such affairs and maintained her innocence until her death. The allegations against Anne were part of a plot orchestrated by Henry's right-hand man, Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell had assisted Henry in his mission to obtain a divorce and marry Anne, but had come to dislike the Queen. Anne is said to have disapproved of Cromwell using wealth accumulated from the dissolution of the monasteries to further the ambitions of the monarchy. When Henry began to grow tired of Anne and the fact that she had not yet given birth to a son, Cromwell once again acted in Henry's interests, and in the process succeeded in removing his own opponent. Anne's execution in 1536 allowed Henry to remarry, and paved the way for Cromwell to maintain his position of power.

In terms of Catherine Howard's downfall, it is possible that she had engaged in an affair with Thomas Culpeper, a man who she had previously considered marrying, during her marriage to the King. Also, as a teenager Catherine had been in a relationship with Francis Dereham, with whom she may have exchanged vows or have at least agreed to marry. When information came to light about Catherine's past, which suggested she had not been a virgin when she married the King, her title as queen consort was removed and she was imprisoned. Dereham and Culpeper were both executed, followed shortly by Catherine in February 1542.

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The Later Tudor Queens

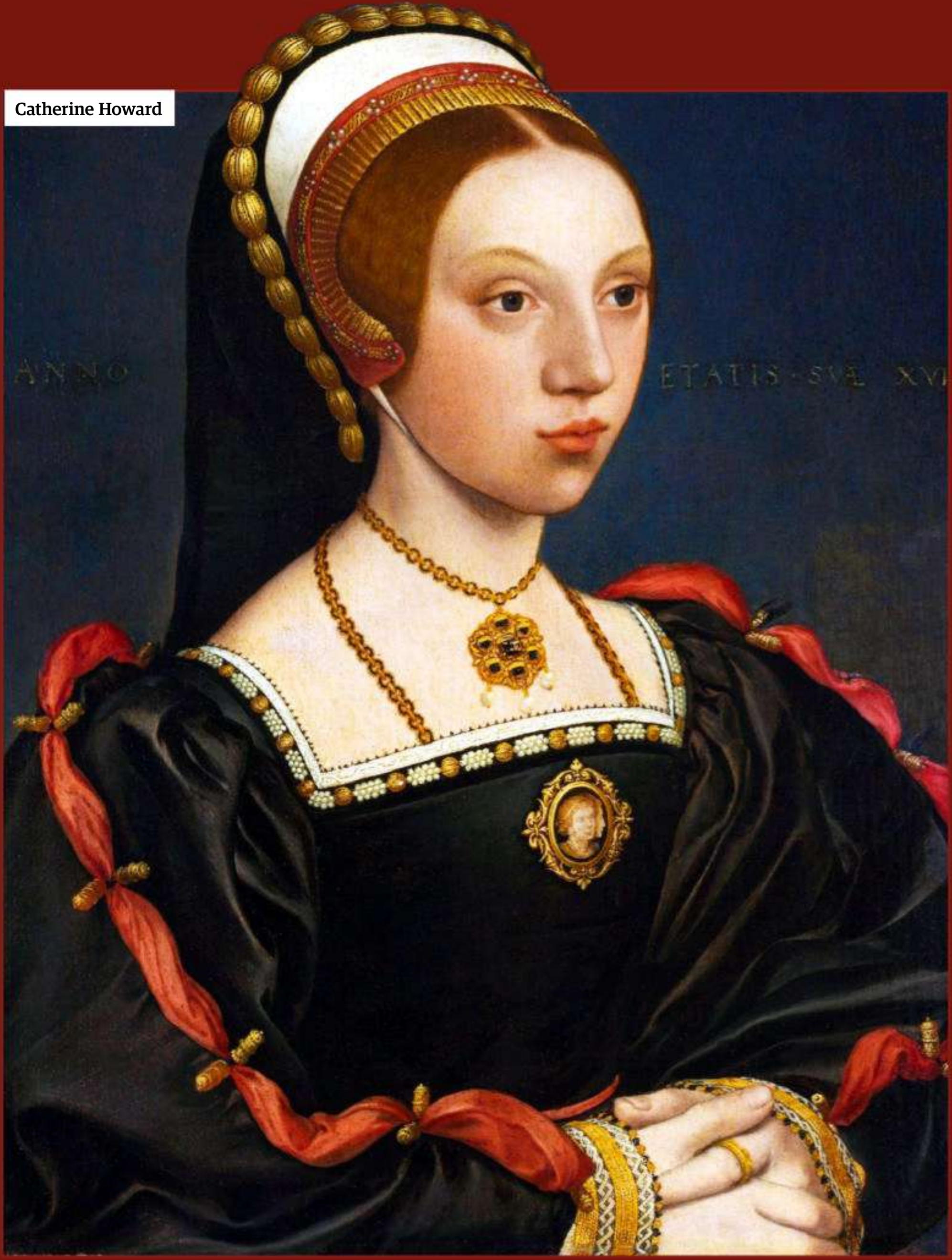
HOW HENRY'S WIVES INFLUENCED HIS DAUGHTERS' LIVES

As the daughters of Henry VIII, the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth had front row seats to the reigns of many of their father's wives. The daughters of Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn respectively, Mary and Elizabeth, witnessed from a young age the disrespect shown to their mother and stepmothers by their tyrannical father, which probably impacted their outlook on life as they grew up.

They had been educated to a high standard by leading humanist scholars, but this had been to ensure they would grow to be suitable consorts to foreign princes and aristocrats. While neither girl was ever expected to become queen, their brother, Edward, died at a young age and so each got the opportunity to rule. Both were powerful monarchs who, while holding differing religious beliefs, had strength in their convictions and worked hard to honour their ambitions for England.

Mary's childhood had been a troubled one, with her experiencing periods of isolation from her father and the English court after her parents divorced. Without the efforts of Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves and Catherine Parr, Mary may have remained estranged from her family and thus may never have been restored to the line of succession.

Elizabeth, though closer to her father than Mary, also benefited from the advocacy and love of her stepmothers. Anne of Cleves and Catherine Parr could both be characterised as surrogate mothers for Elizabeth, and both were smart and educated women who likely influenced Elizabeth's character as she grew up. In fact, parallels can be drawn between the independence of Anne of Cleves and the life Elizabeth committed herself to as queen.



Catherine Howard

CATHERINE HOWARD

c.1524-1542

The youngest of Henry's wives, Catherine Howard is often remembered as a promiscuous young girl who did not grasp the magnitude of her position as queen consort and the danger she put herself in with Henry. It is widely accepted that she engaged in relations with several men throughout her short life, both before and during her marriage to the King. Like her cousin, Anne Boleyn, Catherine was executed on Henry's orders after being charged with treason and accused of committing adultery. But is it fair that her affairs make up the entirety of her legacy?

As queen consort, it is unsurprising that she did not have as much political and religious input as some of Henry's other wives. Catherine is estimated to have only been around 19 years old when she took on the position in 1540. However, one episode shows her willingness and ability to utilise the limited power she had within Henry's court. In 1541, Catherine appealed to the King to pardon Sir Thomas Wyatt, a poet and statesman who had been imprisoned on charges of treason. Henry granted Catherine her wish and Wyatt was released. It is also said that Catherine sent clothes to Margaret Pole, an elderly woman who was imprisoned and eventually executed by Henry. Maybe, if Catherine had been queen for more than just over a year, or had even lived a longer life, she would have continued in her activism.

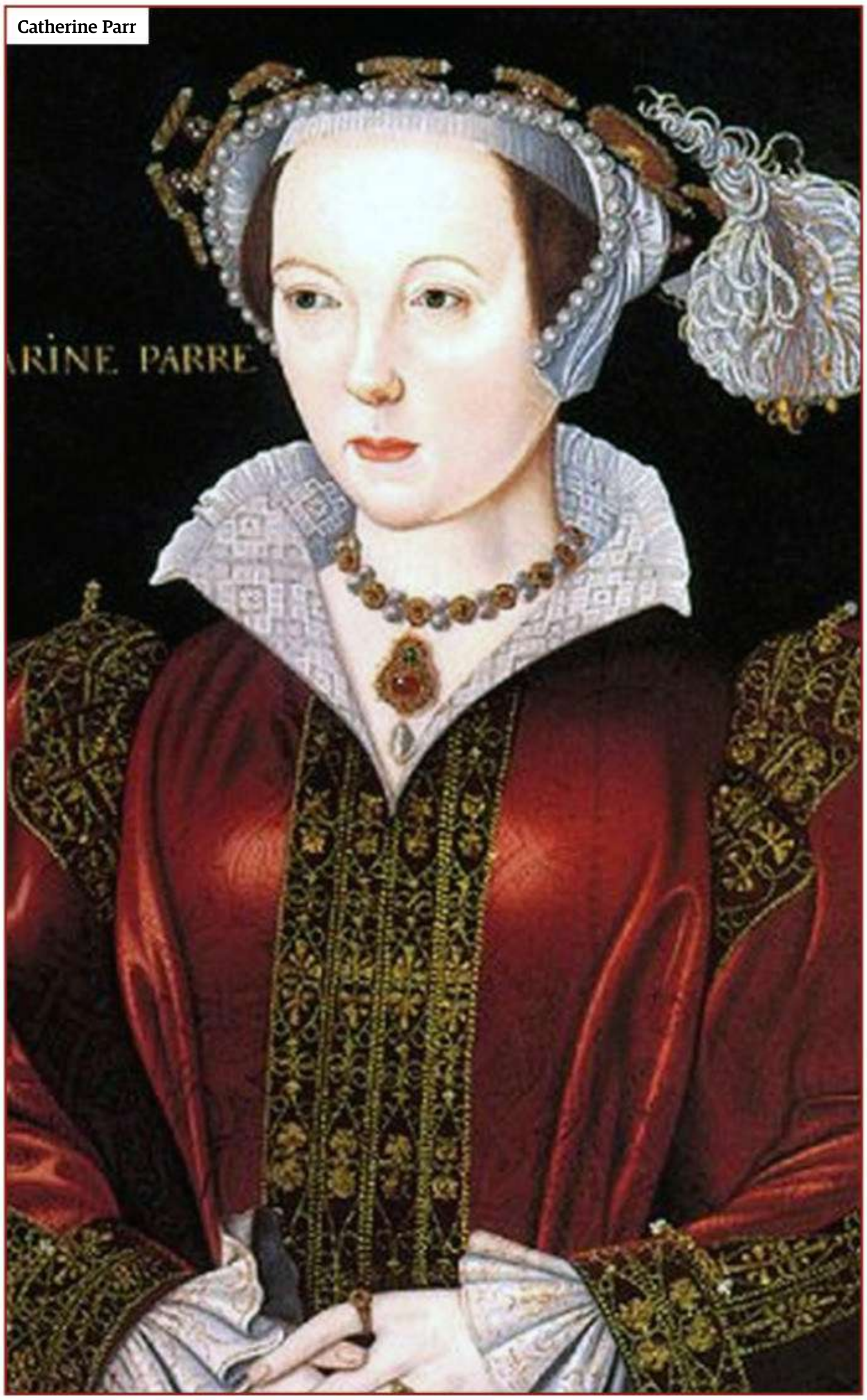
CATHERINE PARR

1512-1548

The last of Henry VIII's wives, Catherine Parr is often remembered as the most successful of the six due to the fact she managed to outlive Henry without suffering divorce or execution. However, Catherine's story may be the saddest in a romantic sense. Historians widely agree that Catherine was in love and hoped to marry Thomas Seymour after the deaths of her first two husbands. However, when the King set his eye on her, Catherine accepted her fate and married Henry in 1543, giving up a life with Seymour to do so.

As queen consort, Catherine involved herself in affairs of state. She acted as regent while Henry was away from court in 1544 but it was her passion for religious reform that came to define her reign. An intelligent and educated woman, Catherine translated and published religious texts, her first being *Psalms or Prayers* in 1544, which she did not put her name to. However, in 1545, Catherine published her second religious book, becoming the first woman to publish under her own name in England. Her outspoken approach to evangelical religious reform in England caused controversy at court and put her at odds with some influential courtiers. In 1543, Henry, who had grown tired of Catherine's opinions, and probably under the influence of Stephen Gardiner, signed a warrant for his wife's arrest. When Catherine heard of the warrant she begged for her life. Whatever she said clearly worked, and when soldiers came to arrest her the following day they found Catherine and Henry reconciled. She had escaped the fate of two of Henry's previous wives.

Catherine, like Jane Seymour and Anne of Cleves before her, also took on a protective role with regards to her stepchildren. Despite having been married before, Catherine had never had her own children and she grew close to Mary, Elizabeth and Edward. When Henry died in 1547, Catherine became Princess Elizabeth's guardian and mentor. Catherine also eventually married Thomas Seymour, but died herself just over a year after Henry.


Catherine Parr

> "Catherine published her second religious book, becoming the first woman to publish under her own name in England"

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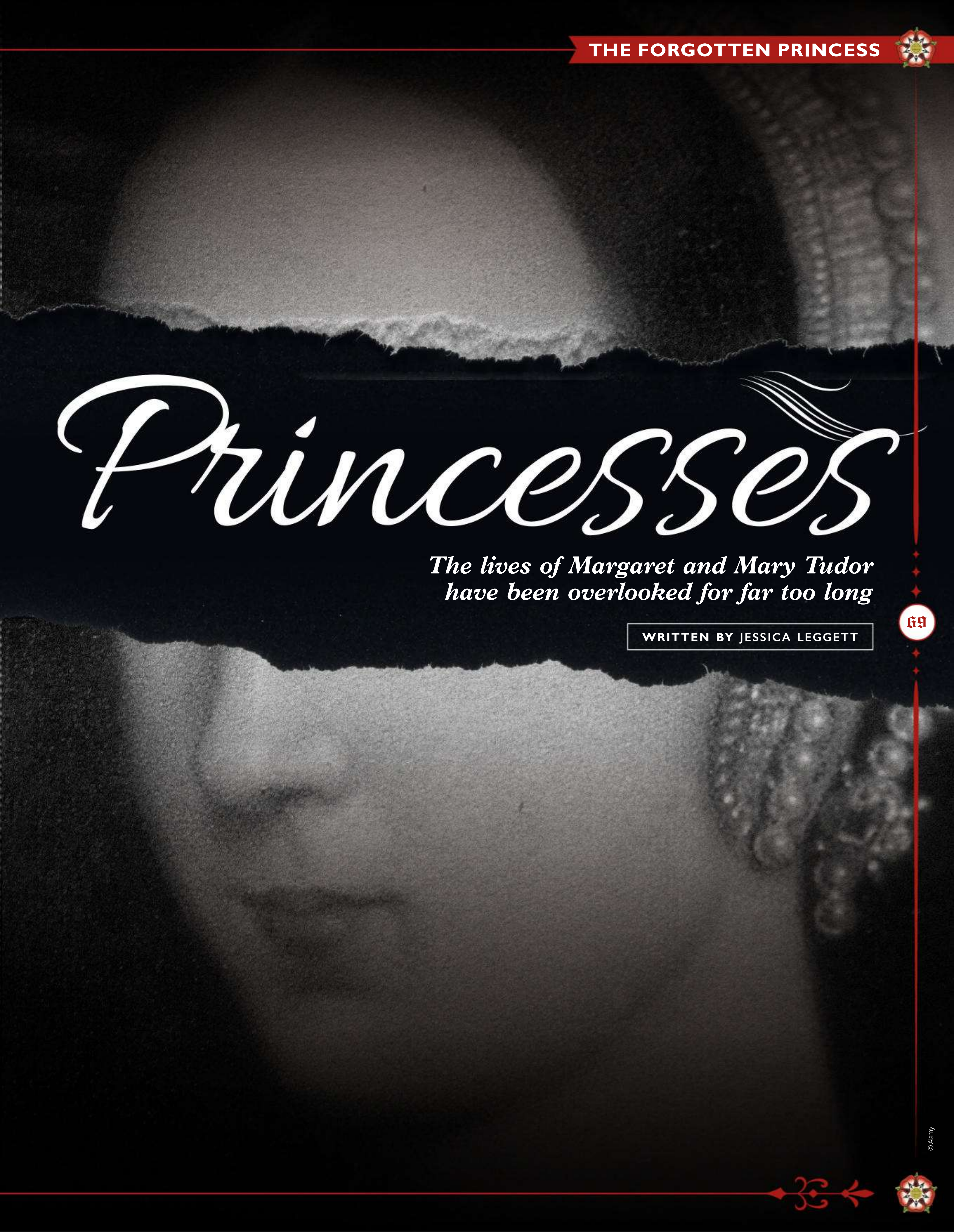
The Forgotten



Princesses

The lives of Margaret and Mary Tudor have been overlooked for far too long

WRITTEN BY JESSICA LEGGETT

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When it comes to the Tudors, it's rare to see Margaret and Mary Tudor discussed in their own right. Born in 1489 and 1496 respectively, they were the surviving daughters of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. The sisters were born into the newly established Tudor dynasty, and it was their father's mission to ensure the dynasty's stability domestically and internationally. As royal princesses, the sisters were destined for diplomatic marriages that would secure crucial foreign alliances.

MARGARET TUDOR, QUEEN OF SCOTS

In January 1502, Henry VII and King James IV of Scotland signed the Treaty of Perpetual Peace and agreed that James would marry Margaret, who was 16 years younger than him. She was 13 years old when they married by proxy in January 1503, only a month before her mother Elizabeth died. In June, Margaret set off for her new life in Scotland in a lavish procession, with her father accompanying her for the first part of the journey north.

On 1 August, she crossed the border into Scotland, and a week later a formal wedding ceremony was held at the Holyrood Abbey. The couple wore white damask outfits and Margaret's gown was trimmed with crimson velvet. Afterwards, there was a short coronation ceremony and James was affectionate towards his young wife, holding her waist throughout the ritual.

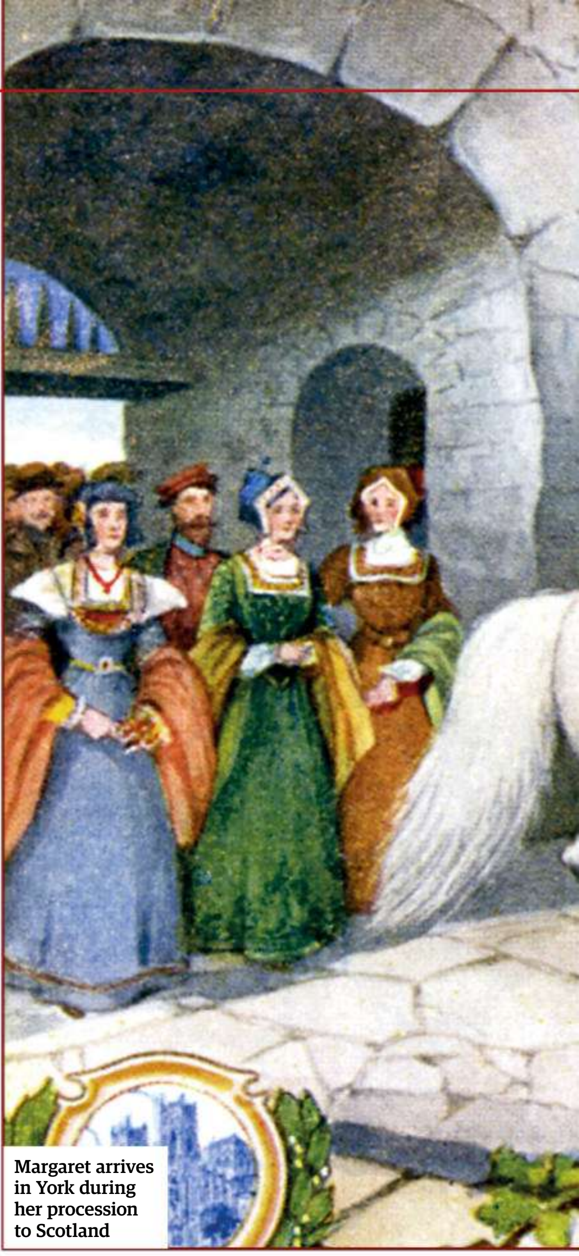
Margaret gave birth to her first child, James, in 1507 but he died shortly after his first birthday. In total, Margaret had six children with James but only one, another son named James who was born in 1512, survived infancy.

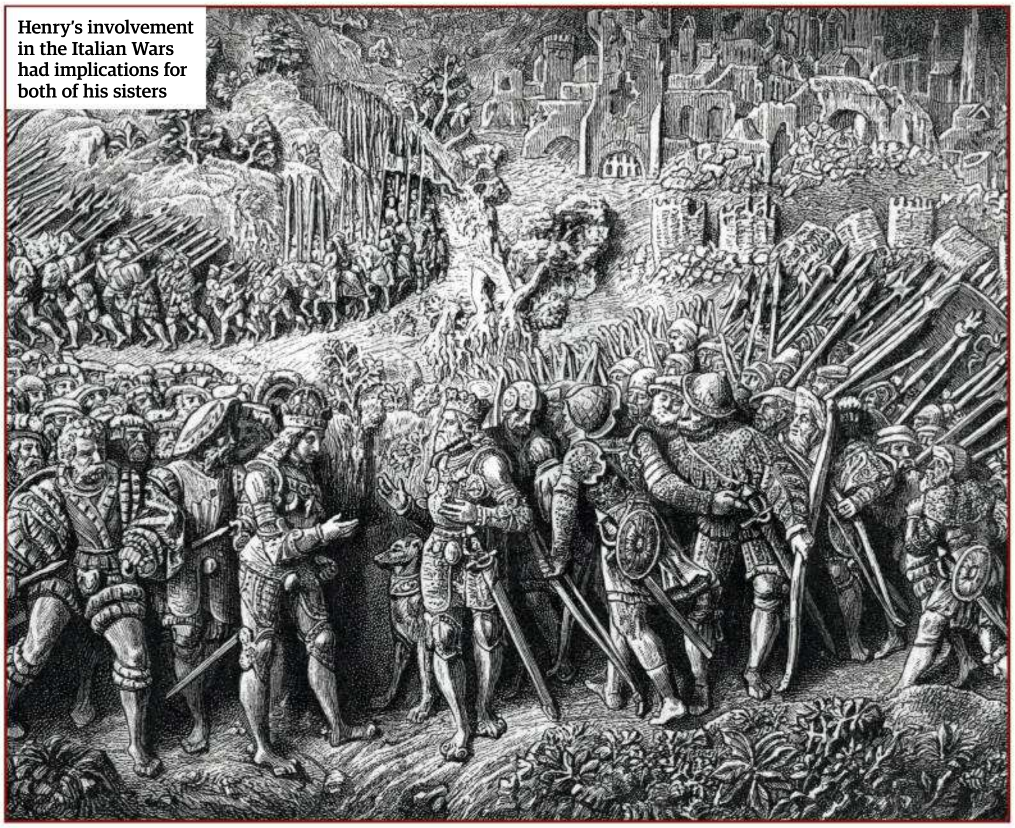
Henry VII died in April 1509 and 17-year-old Henry succeeded him as king. He married Catherine of Aragon, his brother's widow, less than two months later. Tensions between England and Scotland quickly resurfaced with Henry's accession. Margaret herself was furious with Henry when he refused to give her the money that had been left to her in their brother's and father's wills.

In the meantime, the Italian Wars were raging in Europe and Henry joined Pope Julius II's anti-French alliance, the Holy League. In 1512, Henry invaded France, but due to a long-standing alliance between Scotland and France (known as the Auld Alliance), James invaded England to support Louis XII, the French king, in 1513.

The Treaty of Perpetual Peace was broken and Margaret's husband and brother were officially at war. However, James' invasion was a disaster for Scotland. Thousands of Scottish noblemen were slaughtered and James himself was slain at the Battle of Flodden on 9 September 1513. His bloody coat was handed to Catherine, who was acting as regent in England while Henry was in France.

Margaret was 23 years old and pregnant when James was killed. Her husband's will stipulated that she should serve as regent for their 17-month-old son James, as long as she remained a widow. The infant king was crowned King James V on 21 September at Stirling Castle.


Margaret arrives in York during her procession to Scotland

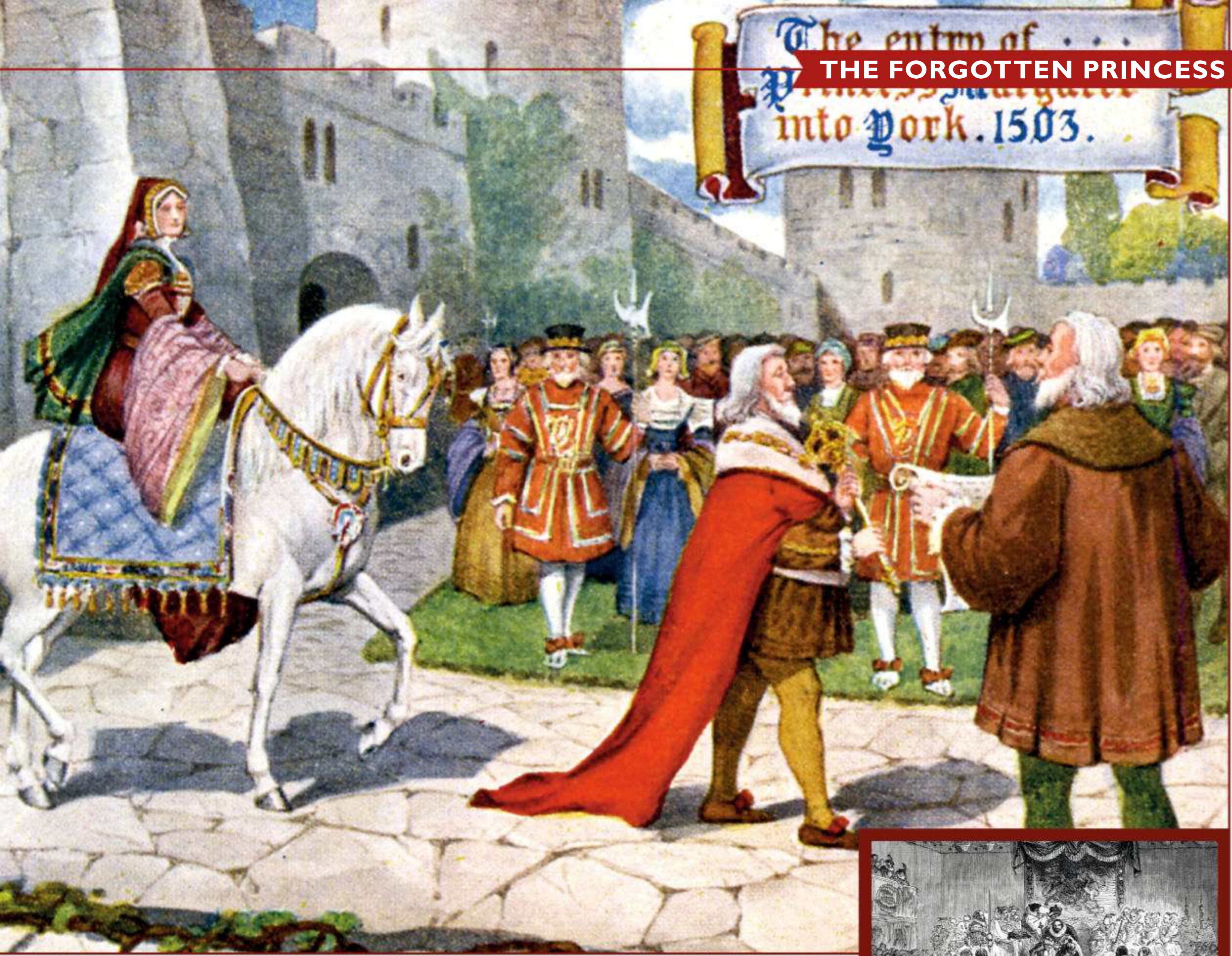

Henry's involvement in the Italian Wars had implications for both of his sisters

Margaret's role as regent was confirmed, but she was still in a precarious position. She was both a woman holding power in a patriarchal society and the English king's sister, and there were those at court who feared that she would be heavily influenced by her brother. As a result of these fears, Margaret's opponents wanted the Duke of Albany, the late king's cousin, to be named as regent. Albany had spent his entire life at the French court and he would support the Auld Alliance over England.

Initially, Margaret managed the regency well and peace was reached between England, Scotland and France. In April 1514, she gave birth to a son named Alexander. But, four months later, she secretly married Archibald Douglas, 6th Earl of Angus, a member of one of Scotland's most powerful noble families.

It was a catastrophic mistake. Margaret's actions enraged the nobles at court, who feared that Angus would influence her, and she had also broken the condition set for her regency. Margaret's decision to marry Angus remains a mystery but it has been speculated that she felt she needed male protection because of her enemies at court.

Regardless of her reasons for remarrying, Margaret's decision sparked fresh feuding at


The entry of Princess Margaret into York. 1503.

> *"The Treaty of Perpetual Peace was broken and Margaret's husband and brother were officially at war"*

court. She sought Henry's help, but he offered little assistance beyond suggesting that she flee to England with Angus and her sons, which she refused to do. In less than a month, Margaret was removed from the regency and replaced by Albany. She was then forced to flee to Stirling Castle with her sons after the Privy Council decided she should no longer have custody of them. In 1515, Albany arrived from France and besieged the castle, forcing Margaret to hand over her sons.

Her property and revenue were confiscated and Margaret fled to England while pregnant with Angus' child, giving birth to Margaret Douglas in Northumberland in October 1515. Following her arrival, Margaret received a gift of new gowns from her brother but that December, she learned that her youngest son had died. After 13 years away from England, she spent a year in London, reuniting with her siblings.

Following Henry's urging and Albany's assurances that she would be safe and that her property and revenue would be returned to her, Margaret returned to Scotland in 1517. Margaret declared she wanted a divorce from her estranged husband after learning that he had been living with a mistress and spending her money in her absence. Ironically, Henry was opposed to her decision to divorce Angus, even though he would pursue his own divorce years later. The continuing conflict between Albany and Angus drove the latter to exile in France, and Margaret switched her allegiance to Albany, who also backed her divorce petition. Yet, when Albany returned to France in 1524, Margaret staged a coup with her allies at court and declared that James, now 12 years old, was an adult who no longer needed a regent. Parliament subsequently recognised Margaret as the king's chief councillor. However, the following year, Angus returned and ▶

The English succession

The Treaty of Perpetual Peace was the first attempt in over 170 years to end the on/off warfare between England and Scotland. However, the marriage of Margaret and James also brought the Stewart house into the English line of succession. This had been opposed by many in England, but Henry VII had assured his critics that it would be England absorbing Scotland, not the other way round.

The marriage did lead to the eventual Union of the Crowns when Margaret and James' great-grandson, King James VI, succeeded Queen Elizabeth I as King James I of England in 1603. Interestingly, Margaret was James' great-grandmother on both sides of his family tree as his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, was the daughter of King James V. His father, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, was the son of Lady Margaret Douglas, Margaret's daughter with the Earl of Angus.

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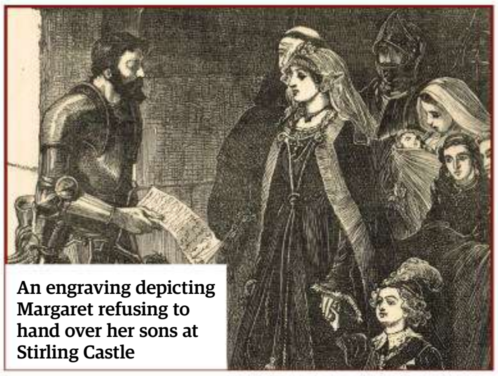
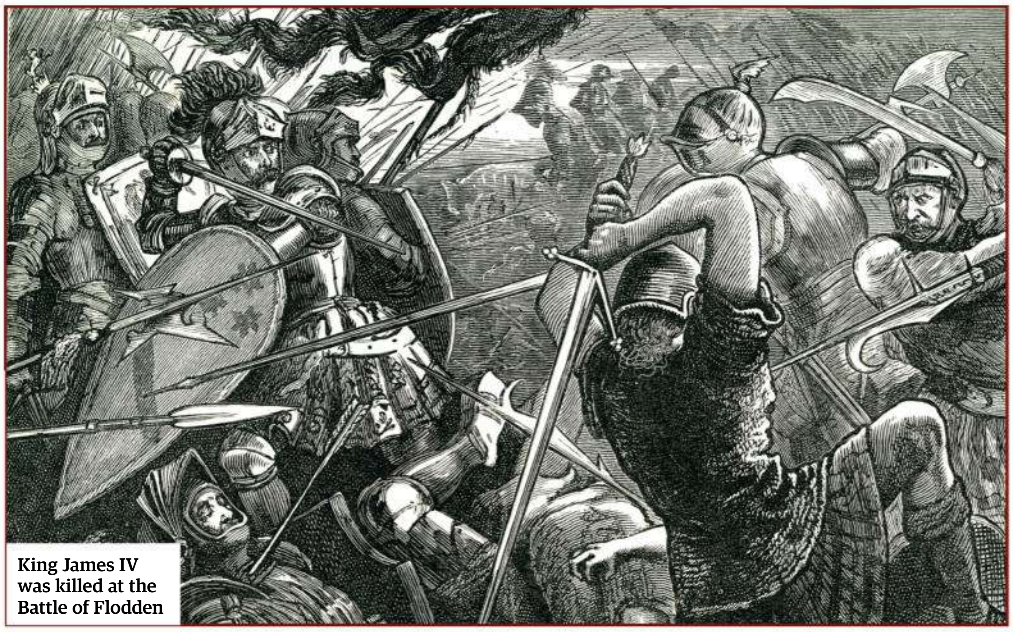


An engraving depicting Margaret refusing to hand over her sons at Stirling Castle



King James IV was killed at the Battle of Flodden

Did Mary hate Anne Boleyn?

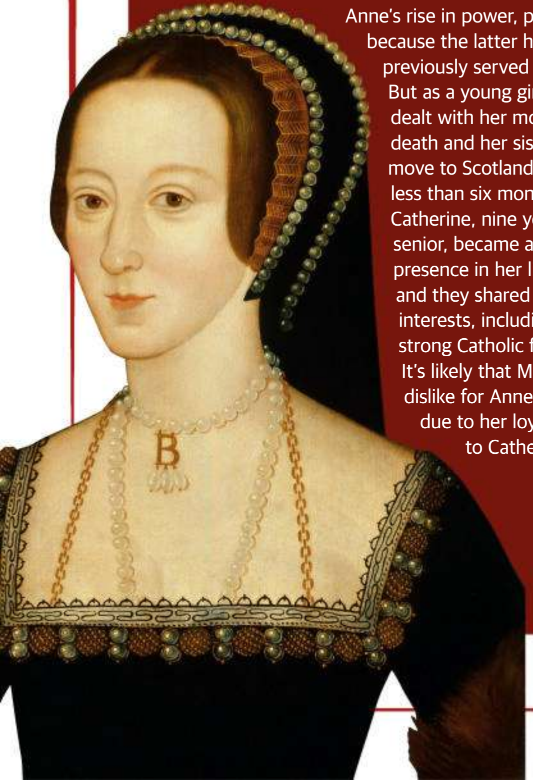
THE TRUTH ABOUT THEIR NOTORIOUS FEUD

In 1514, Anne arrived in France to serve as a maid to Mary during her wedding to King Louis. When Louis dismissed the majority of Mary's retinue the next day, Anne was one of the few ladies who was permitted to stay. However, she was five years younger than Mary and lower in status, so it is unlikely that they would have been close.

Anne stayed in France for the next seven years after Mary returned to England following her marriage to Charles. When Anne arrived in England in 1522, the two women would meet again, this time in a pageant where Anne famously played the role of 'Perseverance,' and Mary played the role of 'Beauty.'

During the late 1520s, Mary found herself at odds with Henry, who was pursuing a divorce from Catherine in order to marry Anne. Mary was enraged, and in 1529 she left the court in protest, refusing to accept Anne as anything more than a mistress. In March 1532, the men of the Duke of Norfolk, Anne's father, and the men of the Duke of Suffolk, Mary's husband, got into a fight. It was allegedly sparked by something Mary said about Anne, and one of Suffolk's men died as a result. Mary died soon after Anne's coronation, so did not witness her downfall.

She's often said to have resented Anne's rise in power, possibly because the latter had previously served her. But as a young girl, Mary dealt with her mother's death and her sister's move to Scotland in less than six months. Catherine, nine years her senior, became a strong presence in her life and they shared many interests, including a strong Catholic faith. It's likely that Mary's dislike for Anne was due to her loyalty to Catherine.



took custody of James, effectively imprisoning the young king for the next three years and ruling through him. Margaret's divorce was finally granted by Pope Clement VII in 1527, and she married Henry Stewart in March 1528. In June, James V freed himself from Angus, who fled Scotland once again, and began ruling in his own right. Stewart was made Lord Methven by the king and initially Margaret and her husband were influential advisers to James - although Methven proved to be just as unfaithful to his wife as Angus was.

As James grew older, however, Margaret's influence declined and she was increasingly sidelined by her son. She endeavoured to maintain diplomatic relations between England and Scotland, lthough James was more interested in maintaining the Auld Alliance.

MARY TUDOR, QUEEN OF FRANCE

When Margaret left for Scotland in 1503, Mary lost both her mother and her sister in less than sixth months. It is likely that she formed her close relationship with Henry during this time - she is often described as his favourite sister - and it is possible that they were educated together.

In 1507, Mary had been betrothed to Catherine's nephew, Charles, who would eventually become Holy Roman Emperor. The marriage would secure another important alliance for Mary's father, as Charles was the grandson of Maximillian, Holy Roman Emperor and a member of the powerful Habsburg family.

After Julius II's death in 1513, his successor, Pope Leo X, signed a peace treaty with Louis XII. Henry had little choice but to make peace with France unless he wanted to face the rest of Europe alone. Mary's long-standing engagement to Charles was broken so that she could marry the French king, securing the new peace between England and France, arranged thanks to Cardinal Wolsey's efforts.

News of the impending marriage was met mostly with disdain across Europe. Mary, who had inherited her mother's fair skin and hair, was 18 years old and a typical English rose. Louis, on the other hand, was 52 and in poor health, suffering from severe gout. Contemporary historian Edward Hall claimed that in the Low Countries, part of the Habsburg dominions, they were disappointed to lose Mary and that they "spake shamefully of this marriage, that a feeble old & pocky man should mary so fayre a lady".

In August 1514, Mary married Louis by proxy, and a month later she travelled to Dover with Henry and Catherine to begin her new life in France. It was here where Mary allegedly received a promise from her brother that if she married Louis as he desired, she would be able to choose her next husband if she outlived her first. Mary left for France, accompanied by her retinue and escorted by Henry's best friend, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk - the man she was in love with.

The wedding of Mary and Louis took place in October, with the bride wearing cloth of gold. However, when Louis decided to dismiss most of Mary's English retinue, their marriage hit a snag.

> *"Mary took responsibility for the marriage,most likely to protect Charles from her brother's wrath"*

The move left Mary feeling vulnerable at the French court and she wrote to Henry to complain, with Louis later explaining that he believed her ladies were keeping him from his new wife.

The engagement and marriage had been conducted quickly and for good reason. Louis was considerably older than his bride and he had also failed to produce a son, so his throne was set to be inherited by his son-in-law and nearest male relative, Francis of Angoulême.

Louis died on 1 January 1515, less than three months into his marriage. Despite the fact that his death was not unexpected, many people blamed Mary, claiming that the king had spent the last months of his life trying to please his young wife. Following her husband's death, Mary went into mourning and seclusion for 40 days, while France waited to see if she was pregnant with Louis' child, which would have impacted the succession.

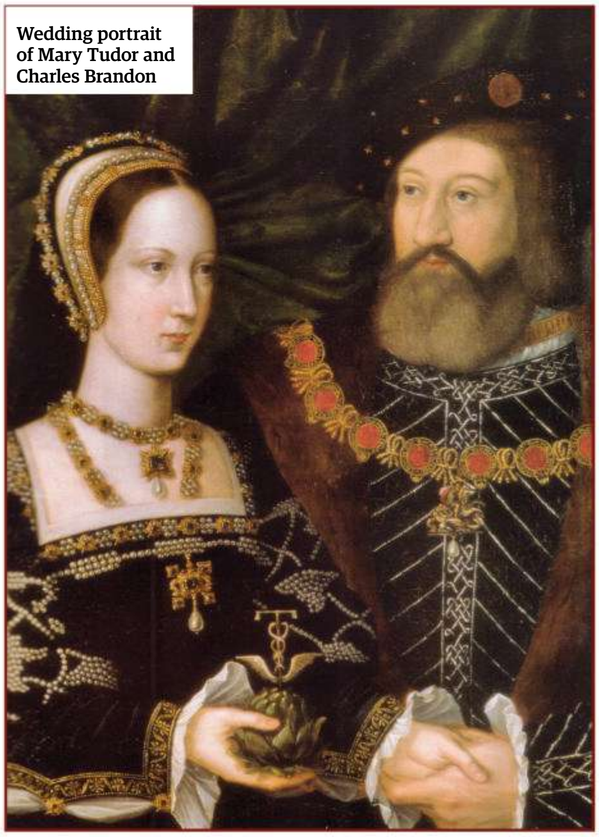
Mary was not pregnant and Francis succeeded to the throne as Francis I. Henry dispatched Charles Brandon to France again to bring his sister home. She was still a young and highly desirable bride and Henry wanted to ensure that they kept the wealth that Mary had acquired during her brief reign as queen. Henry reportedly warned Charles not to marry his sister while they were in France, which Charles promised that he would not.

However, Mary was at risk of becoming a diplomatic pawn once again. As Henry's sister, he had an interest in marrying her off a second time for his own advantage, despite the promise he had supposedly made her. Yet, as the dowager queen of France, Francis also had a vested interest in Mary's marriage prospects because he also could have potentially benefited from her remarriage.

Upset, Mary refused to marry again unless she could choose the man she wanted: Charles. In March 1515, the couple married in secret in Paris, with only ten people in attendance. This included King Francis, who had been persuaded to support the marriage by Charles, and who likely supported the couple because it prevented Henry from gaining a diplomatic advantage by marrying Mary off again.

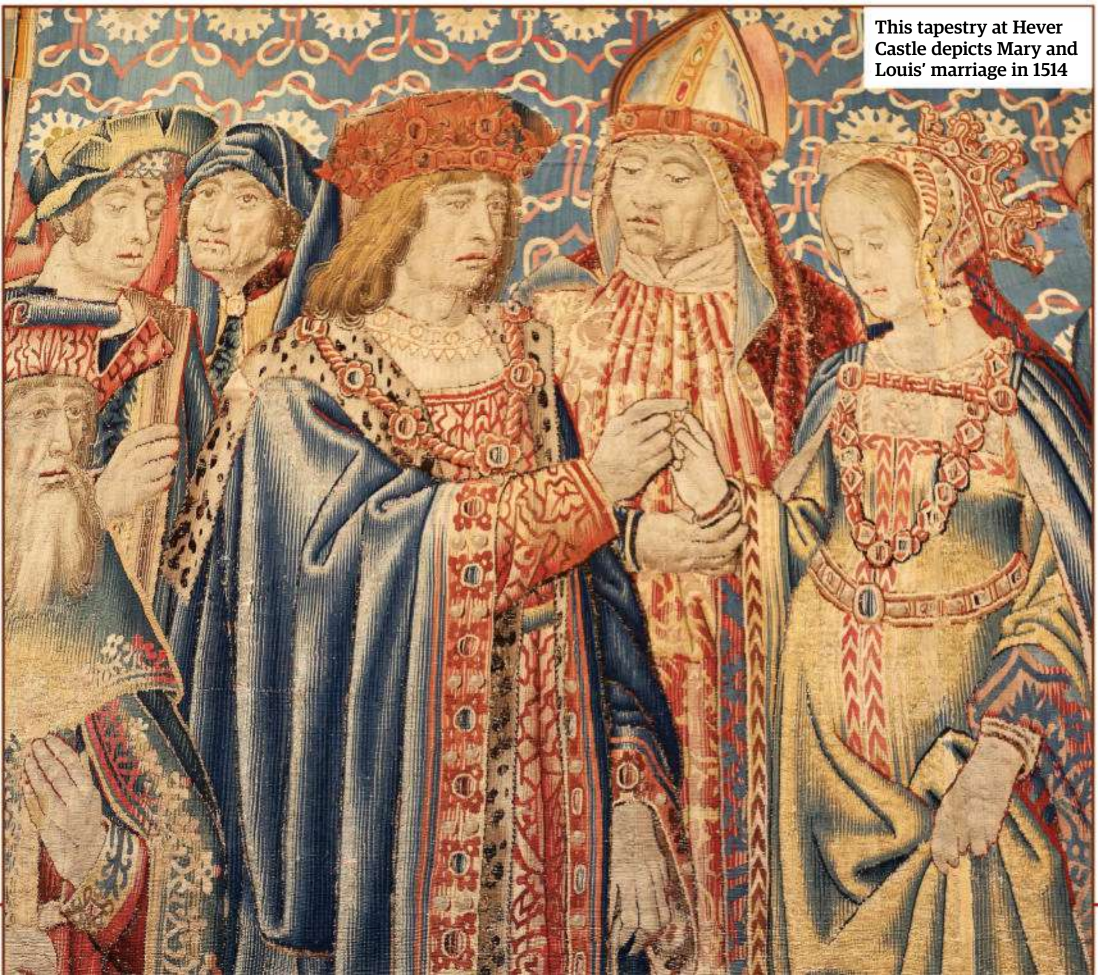
Henry was humiliated by Mary and Charles' secret wedding. What was worse, Charles had committed treason by marrying the king's sister without express permission. Mary was safe because she was a royal princess and Henry's favourite sister, but Charles was in danger of being executed. The newlyweds attempted to minimise the fallout by writing letters to Henry, apologising for their deception. Mary took responsibility for the marriage, most likely to protect Charles from her brother's wrath, with Charles claiming he had no choice but to marry Mary because she was so distraught.

The couple benefitted from the fact that they also had the support of Cardinal Wolsey, who intervened with Henry on their behalf, and even edited Mary's letters to her brother before she sent them. The fact that they stayed in France after the wedding may have given Henry a chance to cool off.


Wedding portrait of Mary Tudor and Charles Brandon

Although Henry was furious, he knew Brandon was ultimately loyal to him and was no threat to him, and his anger was more likely the result that his right to make the decision was taken from him. Mary and Charles managed to buy the king's forgiveness by paying a fine of £24,000, as well as Mary's dowry and the jewels and gold plate given to her by Louis.

In May 1515, the couple returned to England and married officially in Greenwich. Henry and Catherine attended the ceremony, which was a significant and public gesture of the king's forgiveness. Although Mary spent little time at court, perhaps because she gave birth to four children between 1516 and 1523, the relationship between Mary, Charles, and Henry improved over time – until Henry's desire to marry Anne Boleyn caused a rift between the two siblings.


This tapestry at Hever Castle depicts Mary and Louis' marriage in 1514

TWO FORMIDABLE WOMEN

Mary died in June 1533, one month after Anne Boleyn's coronation. Margaret spent the rest of her life in Scotland, where she died in 1541. Their lives were certainly complicated and both women took big risks with Margaret, in particular, frequently derided as reckless and ineffective for her decisions. Yet she managed to survive the fractious Scottish court while Mary escaped the fury of their brother, who grew increasingly cruel during his reign, and regained his favour. The sisters made the decisions that were best for them, at a time when royal women had little say over their lives – and that is truly remarkable.

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THIEF • TYRANT • TRAITOR

CROOKED CROMWELL

Does Thomas Cromwell deserve to be condemned to history as a corrupt villain and pawn of a monstrous king?

WRITTEN BY JESSICA LEGGETT

It's easy to conjure up an image of Thomas Cromwell, one of the most famous figures of the Tudor era, gleefully counting piles of coins at his desk as monasteries burn in the background. One of his enemies, Cardinal Reginald Pole, even described him as "an agent of Satan sent by the devil to lure King Henry to damnation". Yet should Cromwell, whose actions changed the course of English history, be remembered in this way?

Little is known about Cromwell's early years. He was born around 1485 and raised in Putney, the son of a brewer and a gentlewoman. He later moved to Italy, joining the French army as a mercenary during the Italian Wars, before entering the household of Francesco Frescobaldi, a Florentine banker.

In 1515, Cromwell returned to England and married Elizabeth Wyckes, with whom he had three children: Gregory, Anne and Grace. Sadly, Elizabeth and their daughters would die in 1529, possibly because of the sweating sickness. By 1520, he had his own practice as a legal adviser in London, and three years later he joined the House of Commons as a burgess.

Cromwell's legal skills, time in Italy and experience with land conveyance soon attracted the attention of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Lord Chancellor. Wolsey hired Cromwell to manage the negotiations and legal work of his numerous projects, including the building of his new college at Oxford and a grammar school in Ipswich. Thirty small monasteries were controversially dissolved to fund them, with Cromwell selling off the lands and goods. Wolsey was impressed with his efficiency and Cromwell quickly became one of his most senior and trusted advisers.

Although Cromwell worked for a Catholic, he harboured an interest in evangelism and was secretly in touch with dissenters and Protestants during this period, even though it was extremely dangerous. He secretly began promoting the English Reformation before it had even started, going as far as to hire Protestant academics for Wolsey's college. When it was discovered that they were heretics, the academics were either imprisoned

Artwork by Joe Cummings

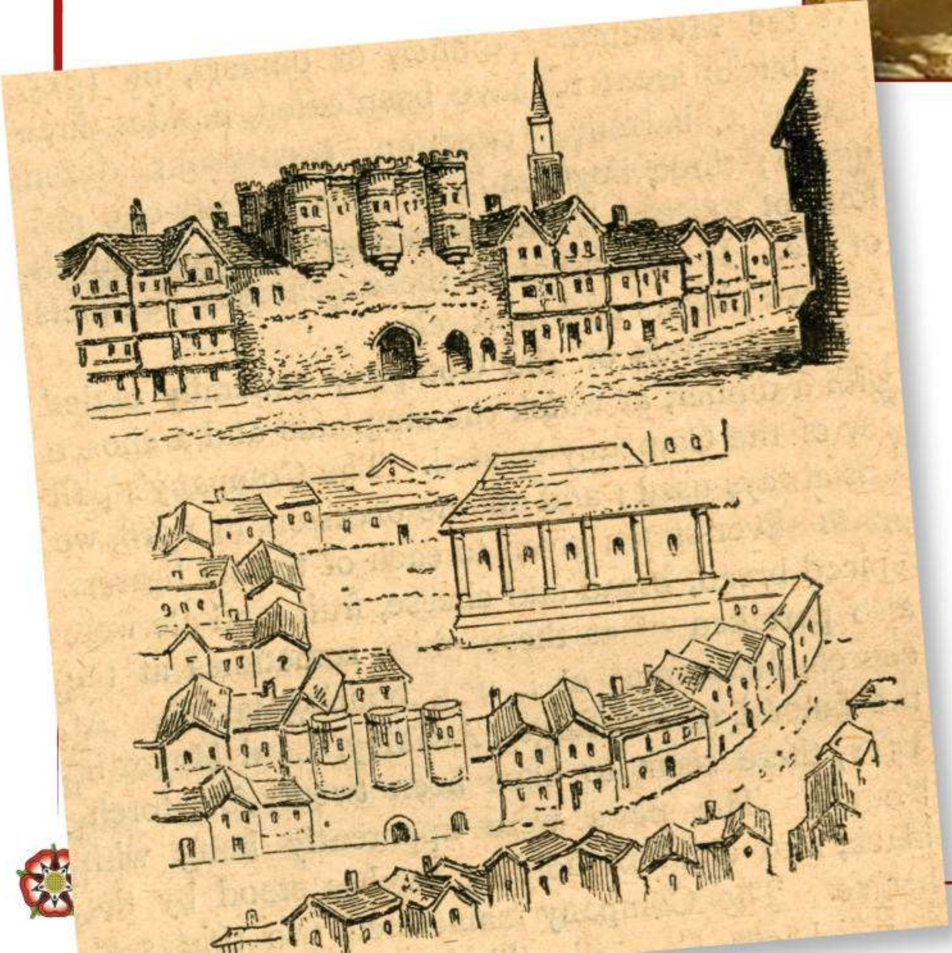
was loyal to Wolsey and this continued even after the cardinal's downfall in 1529, sparked by his failure to negotiate King Henry VIII's annulment from his wife, Catherine of Aragon, with Pope Clement VIII. Cromwell feared that, as Wolsey's man, he would fall too. Acting as an intermediary between Wolsey and Henry, Cromwell secured a pardon for his mentor and his considerable skill, legal experience and even his loyalty to Wolsey impressed Henry in the process. By November, Cromwell had secured a place in Parliament and after gaining Henry's favour, he helped him seize the lands belonging to Wolsey's college and grammar school.

Cromwell managed to survive his mentor's downfall, prompting his fellow reformer Stephen Vaughan to write to him in February 1530, stating, "You now sail in a sure haven." As for Wolsey, his pardon from the king was short-lived. He was eventually charged with treason and sent to the Tower of London, although he died during the journey there.

Henry appointed Cromwell to his Privy Council by the end of 1530. He quickly gained more influence in the Commons over the next year, becoming involved with legal and parliamentary matters alongside Thomas Audley, the speaker of the house. Cromwell, with his increasing sway in the Commons, was on the rise as Henry's most important advisor, to the chagrin of those who saw him as nothing more than a low-born commoner.

The most pressing issue was Henry's 'Great Matter': the annulment of his marriage to Catherine so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. To pressurise the pope into giving his consent, Henry opened what would become known as the Reformation Parliament in November 1529, to attack the church and papal authority in England. Cromwell took charge during the third session of Parliament in January 1532 and his Act In Conditional Restraint Of Annates, limiting the taxes that newly appointed senior clergy in England could pay to Rome, was passed.

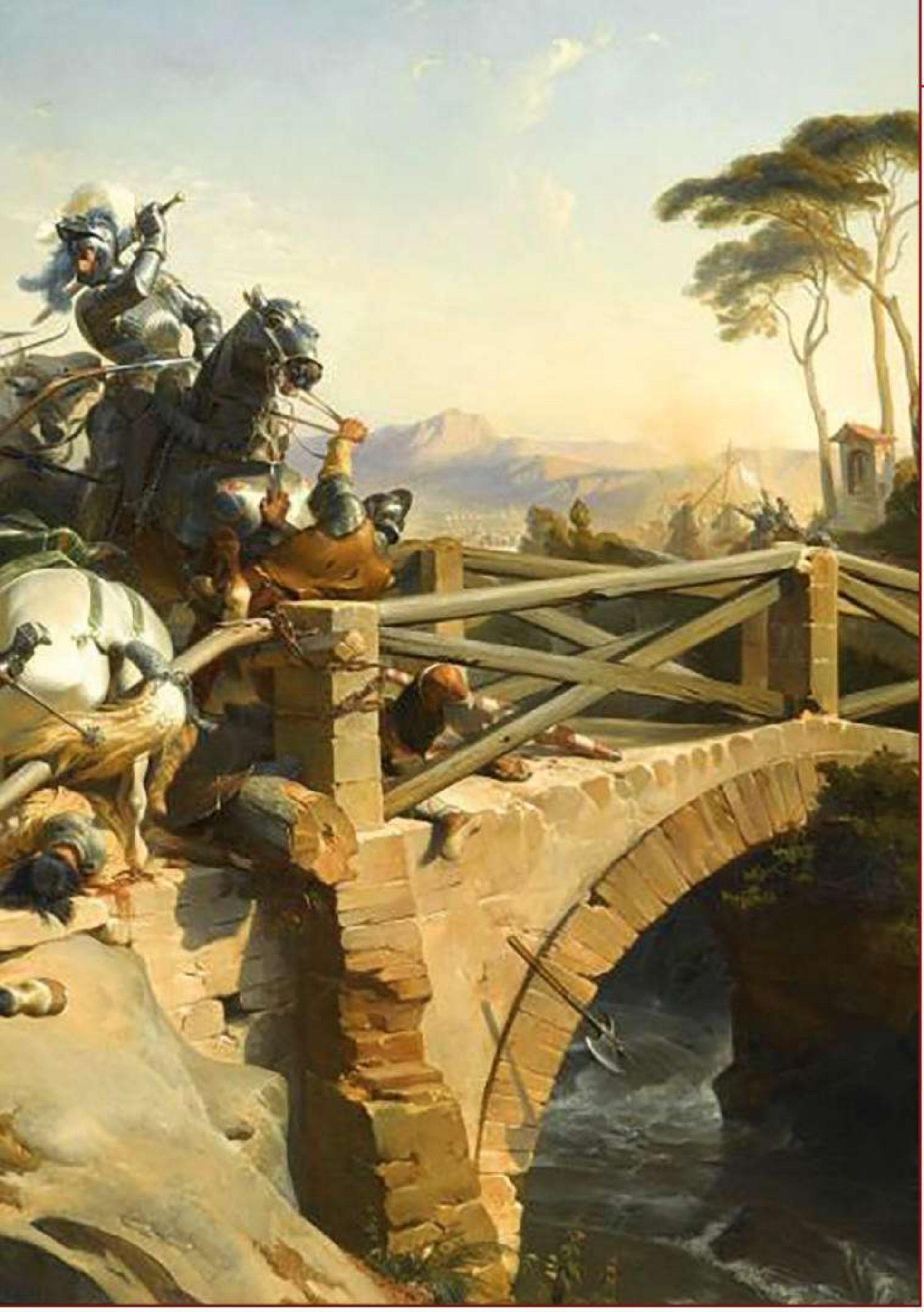
Still, the pope would not relent and Cromwell decided that royal supremacy needed establishing over the church. This would enable Henry to get the annulment he desperately wanted and it was Cromwell's responsibility to make sure the king got his way. It was also an opportunity for Cromwell to end papal authority for good and pave the way for evangelical reform in England.



> *"For the nobility, it was an insult that Cromwell, the son of a brewer, was the king's right-hand man"*

Cromwell started by reminding the Commons of the various anti-clerical complaints that had been made during the session of 1529, successfully reigniting their anger. On 18 March, the Commons presented Henry with their 'Supplication against the Ordinaries', a petition against clerical abuses, in which they asked him to deal with these issues and referred to him as "the only head, sovereign lord, protector and defender". Two months later, the submission of the clergy began as the church surrendered its right to create ecclesiastical laws without the king's permission.

Parliament was subsequently prorogued and Sir Thomas More, who had succeeded Wolsey as lord chancellor in 1529, resigned from his post. As a devout Catholic, More opposed the submission,



Henry's quest for an annulment and his desire to break from Rome. His resignation signalled a victory for reformists and left his rival, Cromwell, as the king's chief minister in all but name.

As Cromwell's power grew, Henry appointed him to his first formal office as master of the jewels in April 1532 and, a year later, as chancellor of the exchequer. It was the beginning of a long line of promotions that Cromwell would receive, all of which steadily increased his wealth, influence and power at court.

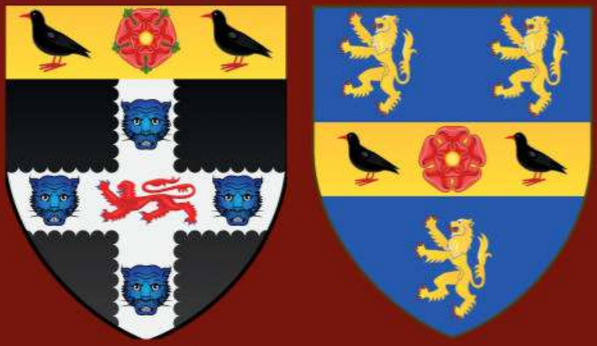
In January 1533, Henry and Anne secretly married and as the bride was pregnant, their union needed legitimising urgently. To this end, Thomas Cranmer, a chaplain to the Boleyns, was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury in March with the pope's approval. A like-minded ally of Cromwell's, they would become the masterminds behind the start of the English Reformation.

Three months after the clandestine wedding, Parliament passed the Act Of Restraint Of Appeals, written by Cromwell. Forbidding all appeals to the pope and asserting that the king held the highest authority on all religious and legal matters, it signified the beginning of the transfer of power from the papacy to the king.

With the passing of the Act, Cranmer now had the power to grant Henry's annulment from Catherine on 23 May, following an ecclesiastical hearing. Five days later, Cranmer declared Henry's marriage to Anne was legal and on 1 June she was crowned queen. In September, to Henry's bitter disappointment, Anne gave birth to a ▶

ABOVE In his youth, Cromwell was a mercenary in the French army during the Italian Wars

OPPOSITE LEFT A drawing of Cromwell's lavish house (centre) based on a 16th-century map of London



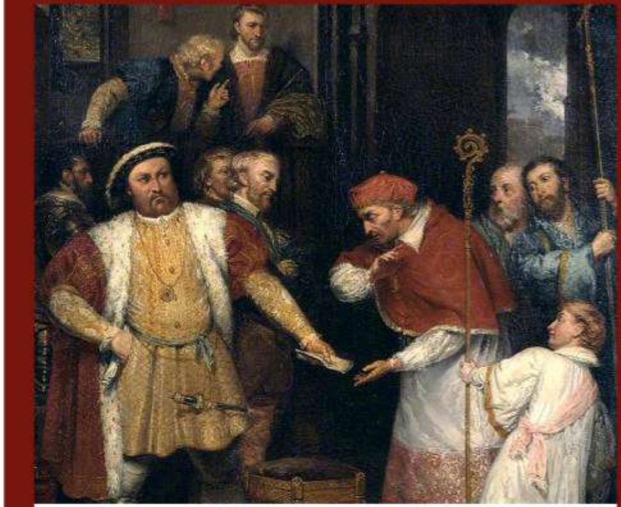
A Sign of Loyalty

COMPARING CARDINAL THOMAS WOLSEY'S AND THOMAS CROMWELL'S COAT OF ARMS

If you take a look at the coat of arms belonging to Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (left) and Thomas Cromwell (right), the first thing you will notice is the similarities between the two. Cromwell designed and formally registered his coat of arms in 1532, two years after his mentor's downfall and death. However, he incorporated motifs from the chief (the band at the top) of Cardinal Wolsey's arms – the two birds (Cornish choughs) and a rose to represent the House of Tudor.

Of course, this was no coincidence. Understanding heraldry during this period was extremely important because every motif and theme had a message, a certain meaning, just like the symbolism found in royal portraiture. By taking aspects of Wolsey's arms and adding them into his own, Cromwell was permanently connecting himself to the cardinal. So why would he do something so risky when Wolsey had fallen so spectacularly from grace?

Firstly, it was a sign of Cromwell's loyalty to the cardinal, the man who'd introduced him to the royal court, setting him on his eventual rise to power under King Henry. Secondly, it was a way to demonstrate to the court that he was, and always would be, Cardinal Wolsey's man. It was a bold move, especially as Wolsey's enemies, particularly Anne Boleyn and her family, including Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, were reaching the peak of their power at court. Ironically the duke would be a primary force in securing Cromwell's downfall in 1540, as he had been in Wolsey's a decade earlier.



Henry VIII charged Wolsey with treason and sent him to the Tower

© Wikipedia, Getty Images

daughter, Elizabeth. However, for now, he remained hopeful that a boy would be next.

After the divorce, the pope 'pronounced sentence against the king, declaring him excommunicated unless he put away the woman he had taken to wife, and took back his Queen...' Furious, Henry refused the pope's demands, wanting to push ahead with breaking England's ties with Rome. With his permission, Cromwell launched a savage smear campaign, circulating sermons and pamphlets throughout the country that attacked the papacy.

Parliament was summoned again in January 1534, under Cromwell's watchful eye, to sever England's remaining ties with Rome. The Act of Succession was passed, placing Elizabeth as heir presumptive and ensuring that any future children of Henry and Anne's were also in the line of succession, while declaring Catherine's daughter Mary as illegitimate. It also stated that if commanded, all subjects had to swear an oath recognising the Act and the preamble, which affirmed royal supremacy and renounced papal authority.

As a reward, Cromwell was appointed as the king's principal secretary and chief minister in April, positions he had informally held for some time. He immediately enforced the new legislation, requiring both houses of Parliament to swear to the succession oath, before turning his attention to Henry's subjects - it was a surefire way to find those who dissented.

This included More, who was summoned to Lambeth Palace on 13 April to swear the oath in front of Cromwell, Cranmer and the rest of the king's commissioners. While he accepted Anne as Henry's wife and the new line of succession, he refused to swear the oath, which recognised royal supremacy. Along with John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who also refused, More was arrested and thrown into the Tower of London.

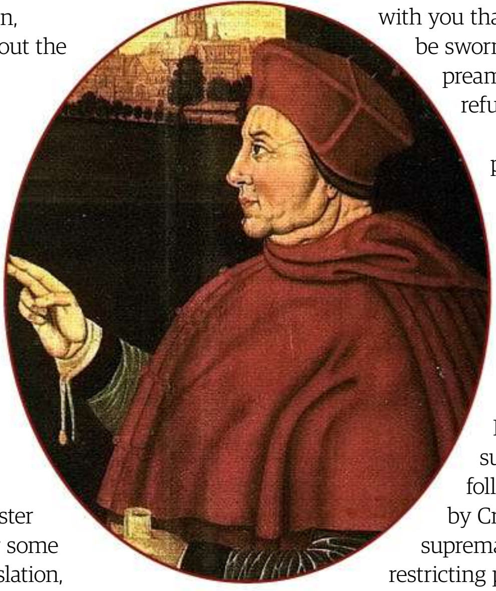
Cranmer, trying to find a peaceful solution to the situation, wrote to Cromwell, suggesting that More and Fisher could swear just to the Act and not the preamble. Cromwell responded by saying that:

> "I have shown your letters to the king, who does not agree with you that the bp. of Rochester and Mr More should be sworn to the Act of Succession and not to the preamble, as it would give occasion to all men to refuse the whole..."

Undoubtedly, Cromwell was a ruthless politician but it has been argued that he did not revel in cruelty as some have previously claimed. Over the next year, he made repeated visits to More in the Tower to convince him to swear to the oath, knowing that if he did not, More was heading to certain death. But More steadfastly refused.

The Act Of Supremacy was passed that November, formally declaring Henry as supreme head of the Church of England, followed by the Treason Act - introduced by Cromwell - which made rejecting royal supremacy a treasonous crime. After initially restricting payments to Rome in 1532, Parliament passed the Act In Absolute Restraint Of Annates, which abolished them entirely and directed these taxes to be paid to the crown, as Cromwell wanted - after all, England was in debt thanks to Henry's costly foreign wars and decadent lifestyle.

More was put on trial for his continued refusal to swear to the oath. He knew that he could only be found guilty if he denied royal supremacy and so maintained his silence. However, Cromwell



RIGHT Cromwell worked for Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, who is depicted here

The Downfall of a Queen

THERE WAS NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN CROMWELL AND ANNE BOLEYN

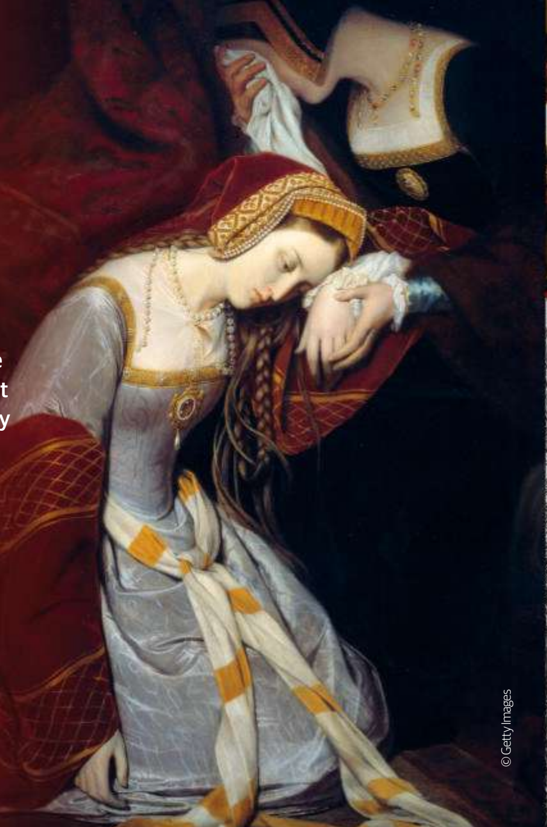
From the time they were alive to the present day, there has been a persistent belief that Cromwell and Anne Boleyn, with their similar religious beliefs and desire for reform, were allies at the Tudor court. When Anne's failure to give Henry a son sealed her fate, Cromwell turned his back on her and secured her execution. However, the truth is Cromwell and Anne were enemies from the very beginning.

Anne had hated Cardinal Wolsey, who had failed to get an annulment for Henry and Catherine of Aragon's marriage, and she did everything she could to turn the king against him. Even though it was Cromwell who worked to secure royal supremacy over the church, thereby giving Archbishop Thomas Cranmer the power to finally end the marriage, Anne continued to see him as Wolsey's man.

The pair clashed frequently, particularly over how the wealth collected from the suppression of the smaller monasteries should be used. While Cromwell sent it to the king's treasury, Anne wanted the money spent on educational and charitable causes such as poor relief. When Anne miscarried in January 1536, Cromwell began to engineer her downfall, although it is likely that Henry privately authorised him to do so.

Anne was subsequently accused of adultery with five men, including her own brother, George as well as sorcery. It was Cromwell who gathered evidence for the case and it was rumoured that he tortured one of the men, Mark Smeaton, to extract a confession. When Anne was beheaded on 19 May at the Tower of London, Cromwell was there to witness the execution.

By the time of Anne's death, Cromwell was at the peak of his power at Henry's court. The fact that he was appointed lord privy seal and raised to the peerage as Baron Cromwell of Wimbledon less than two months later suggests that Anne prevented the progress of his career while she was queen. Of course, Cromwell could never have guessed that, just four years later, he would be following her to the scaffold.



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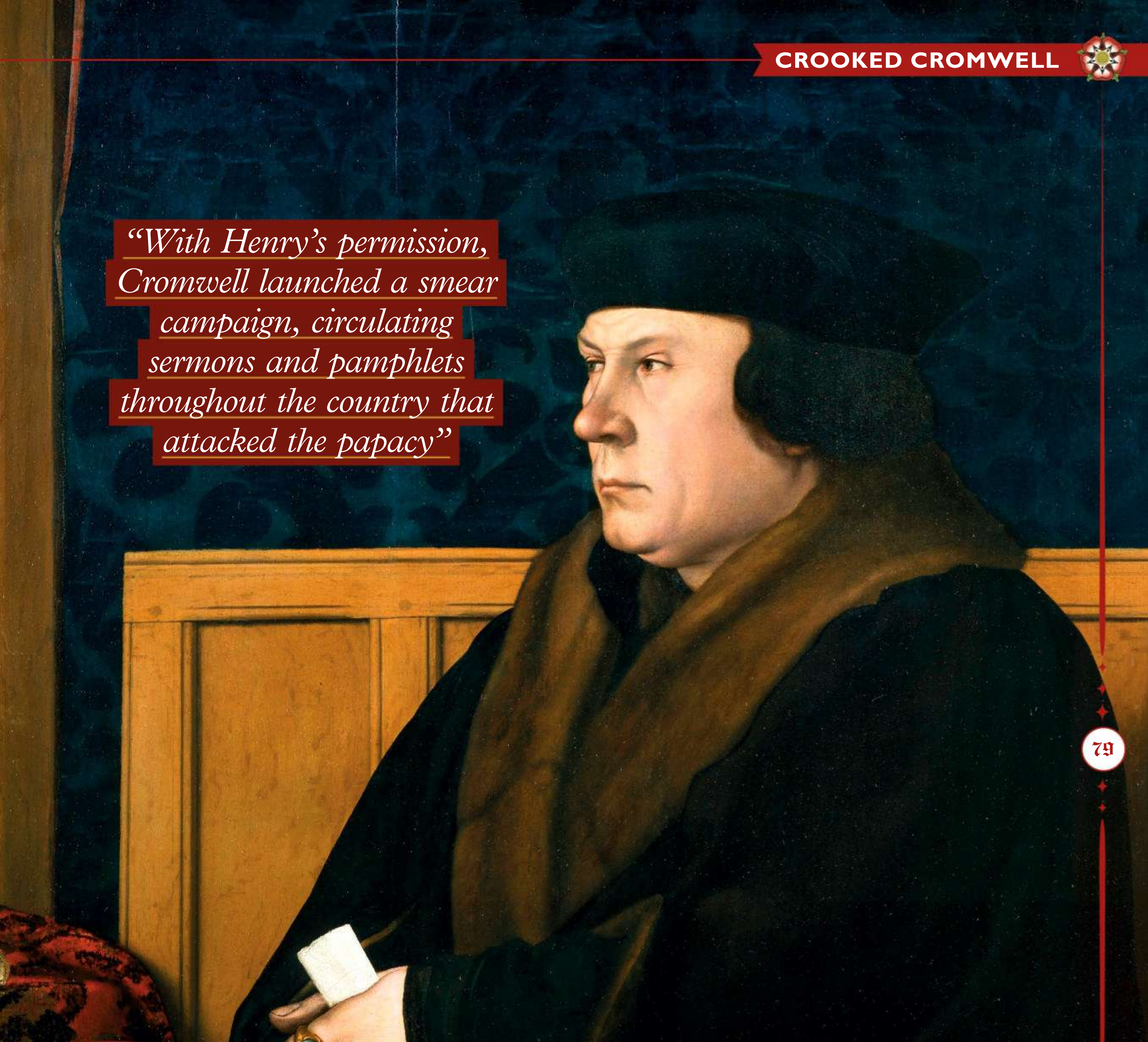
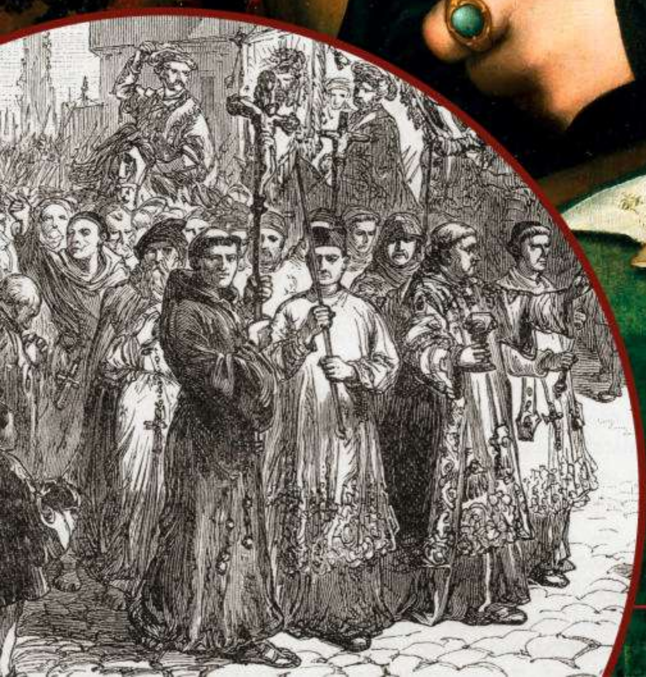
> *“With Henry’s permission, Cromwell launched a smear campaign, circulating sermons and pamphlets throughout the country that attacked the papacy”*





LEFT-INSET The Pilgrimage of Grace opposed Cromwell’s policies

ABOVE Hans Holbein the Younger’s portrait of Cromwell, c.1532

© Wikipedia, Getty Images

was in charge of the trial and he knew that Henry wanted a guilty conviction – More's silence, although not an outward condemnation of the king's actions, was deafening.

Cromwell's agent, Richard Rich, the solicitor general, gave evidence that during a friendly conversation with More the latter had admitted his disapproval of both the oath and the Act. The confession was pure perjury but it was all Cromwell needed to find More guilty under the Treason Act. More was executed on 6 July 1535 at Tower Hill, less than two months after Fisher.

Cromwell's rise continued when he was named vicegerent in spirituals, the only man in history to receive this office, in January 1535. Now he was Henry's deputy in the church, giving him the ability to both exercise power and to enact serious religious reform. Cromwell was in a position to lay the foundations for the Reformation but he had to be pragmatic – Henry relied on him because he got the job done. The king did not envision the same radical changes as Cromwell and with his temper he could easily turn against him.

Following the authorisation of Henry and Parliament, Cromwell sent out his inspectors to visit monasteries across the realm to assess their income and possessions. The findings were compiled into a comprehensive catalogue known as the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, which showed that the monasteries were only providing a small financial contribution to their communities despite their enormous wealth.

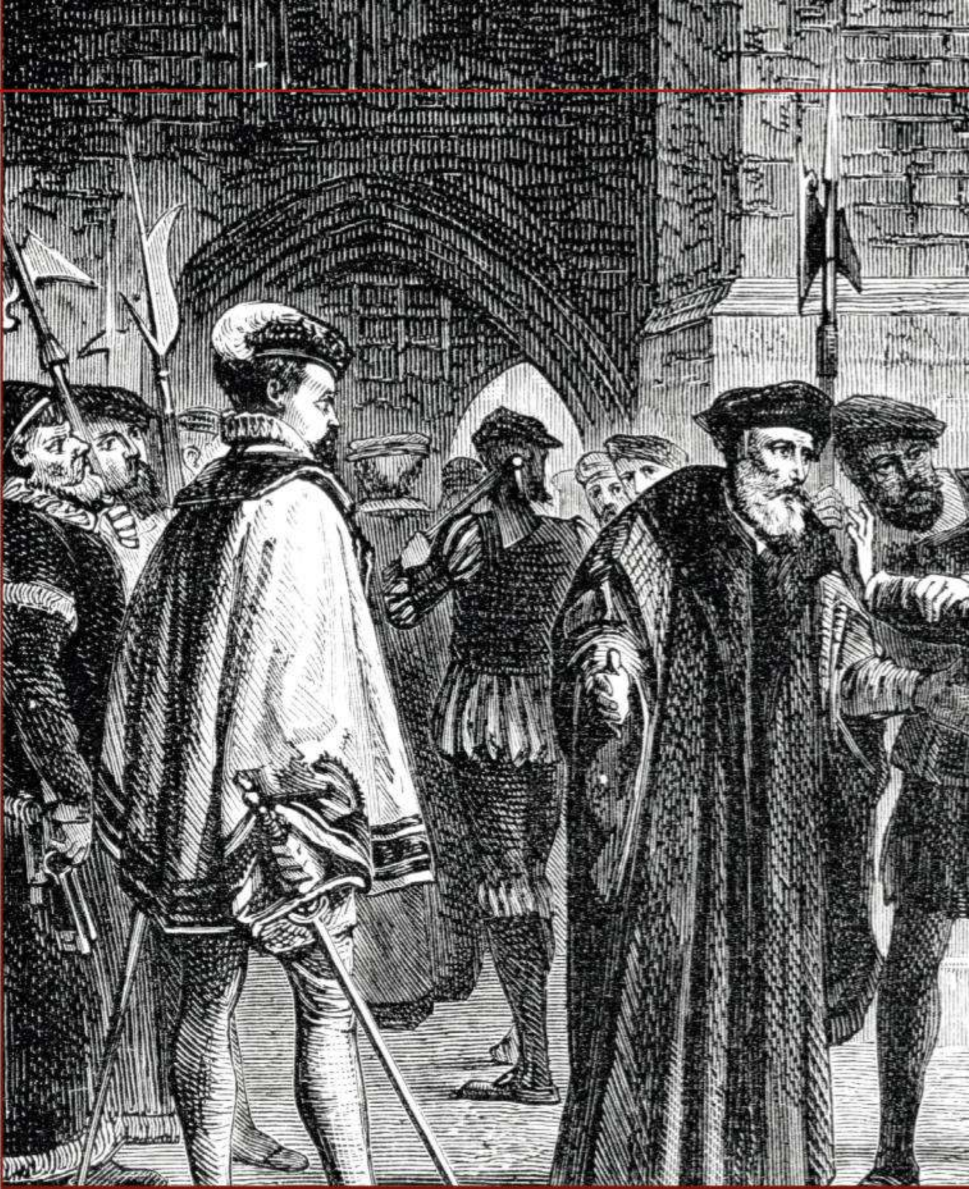
> *"Cromwell was in a position to lay the foundations for the Reformation, but he had to be pragmatic..."*

During their visits, Cromwell's men uncovered corruption, immorality and sexual scandal among the clergy. This was likely exaggerated in many cases but there was truth to some of the allegations, which were gathered together in the *Comperta Monastica*. For Cromwell and Henry, this document and the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* were proof that the monasteries (which continued to support the papacy) had gone morally and financially astray, and as supreme head of the church it was up to the king to deal with it.

The Suppression Of Religious Houses Act in early 1536 allowed Henry to dissolve small monasteries and nunneries with an income of less than £200. Cromwell, having experienced a backlash when he'd dissolved monasteries under Wolsey, argued that the process should happen gradually. However, he was overruled by those, including Audley (who had succeeded More as lord chancellor) who wanted a swift dissolution. Nevertheless, Cromwell was the one to oversee and organise the process.

In the meantime, Queen Anne had failed to provide Henry with the male heir he so desperately wanted. After she suffered a miscarriage in January, it is believed that Henry whispered to Cromwell that he wanted her gone so that he could marry his next love interest, Jane Seymour. Anne was convicted of trumped-up charges of incest, adultery and high treason and executed on 19 May 1536. Henry married Jane just 11 days later.

After the break from Rome, the religious doctrine of the Church of England needed to be decided. Parliament passed



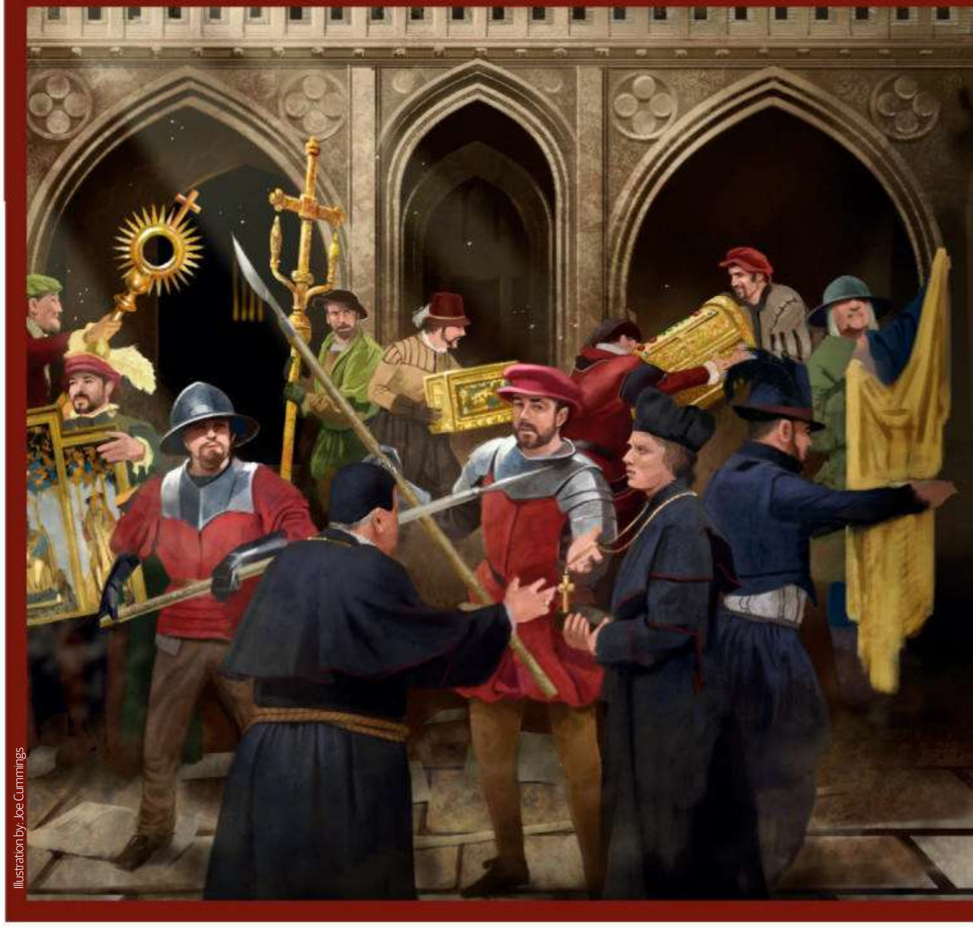
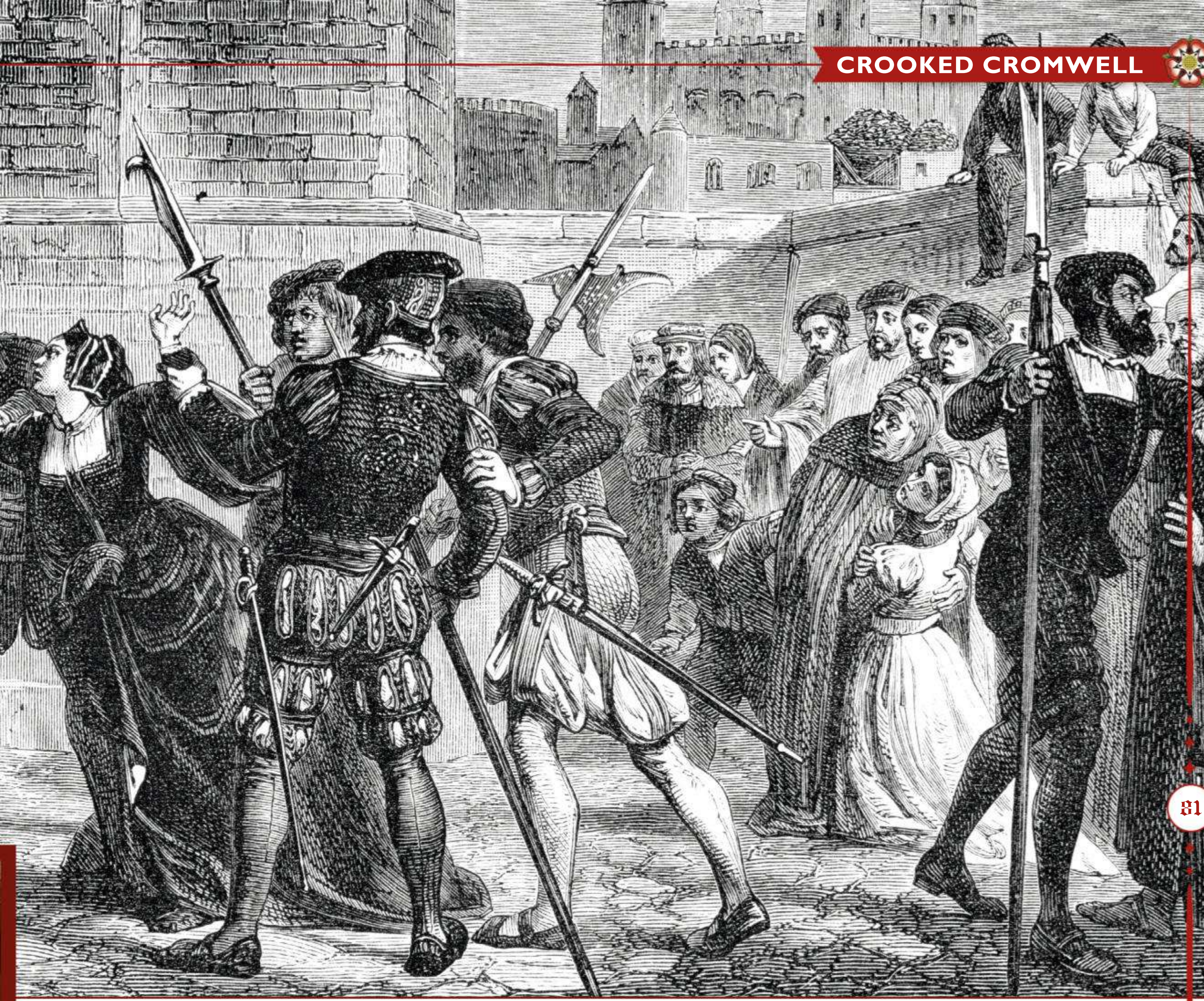


Illustration by: Joe Cummings



ABOVE Sir Thomas More says goodbye to his daughter outside the Tower of London

LEFT Cromwell was the driving force behind the Dissolution of the Monasteries

the Ten Articles, a balance between Catholicism and Protestantism, which formed the official position of the church. Cromwell and Cranmer were involved in the drafting of the Articles that only kept three of the seven sacraments of the Catholic church: baptism, penance and the Eucharist.

The Ten Articles were controversial and Cromwell found himself in hot water after introducing his injunctions, which enforced the reforms and included recommendations for what the clergy should teach their congregations. With growing concern over religious reform, the dissolution, Mary's illegitimacy and economic and political factors, this was the final straw and by October a revolt – the Pilgrimage Of Grace – broke out. The rebellion was eventually quelled in December and despite the threat, Cromwell was not dissuaded from his desire for further religious reform. In 1537, he organised a synod of bishops and clergy, led by Cranmer, which published *The Bishops' Book* to support the ongoing reforms, although the missing four of the seven sacraments were restored. However, Henry was growing uneasy about the reforms and he did not assent to the *Book* immediately, later revising large parts of it. Having said this, Henry still appointed Cromwell to the Order Of The Garter. Among Cromwell's biggest achievements was his injunction in 1538 requiring parishes to register all baptisms, marriages and burials. In 1539 he published the *Great Bible*, the first *Bible* in English, with Henry's permission, and made it mandatory to have one in every church – this remains a large part of his legacy today. Nonetheless, Henry was not opening up to more reform. He remained committed to Catholic practices and conservatism was back on the rise, led by the duke of Norfolk. The Act Of Six Articles was introduced in June, reaffirming traditional Catholic teachings. For Cromwell, this was a kick in the teeth and it left him vulnerable.

Despite his uneasiness at Cromwell's reforms, Henry wanted him to push forward with the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Second Suppression Act was passed by Parliament in 1539. All surviving monasteries, of all sizes and income, were to be closed and those who attempted to resist were executed and their monasteries destroyed. Realising that there was no other option, most of them surrendered their property to the crown. The monastic land and buildings were sold off to families who supported Henry and his supremacy, further securing their loyalty. It is believed that the dissolution added around £1.5 million to the king's treasury.

Unfortunately for Cromwell, Henry's faith in him had been shaken ever since the Pilgrimage Of Grace – and Cromwell's enemies at court noticed. To them, it was an insult that Cromwell, the son of a brewer, was the king's right-hand man. He continued to ruffle feathers when, in 1537, he arranged for his beloved

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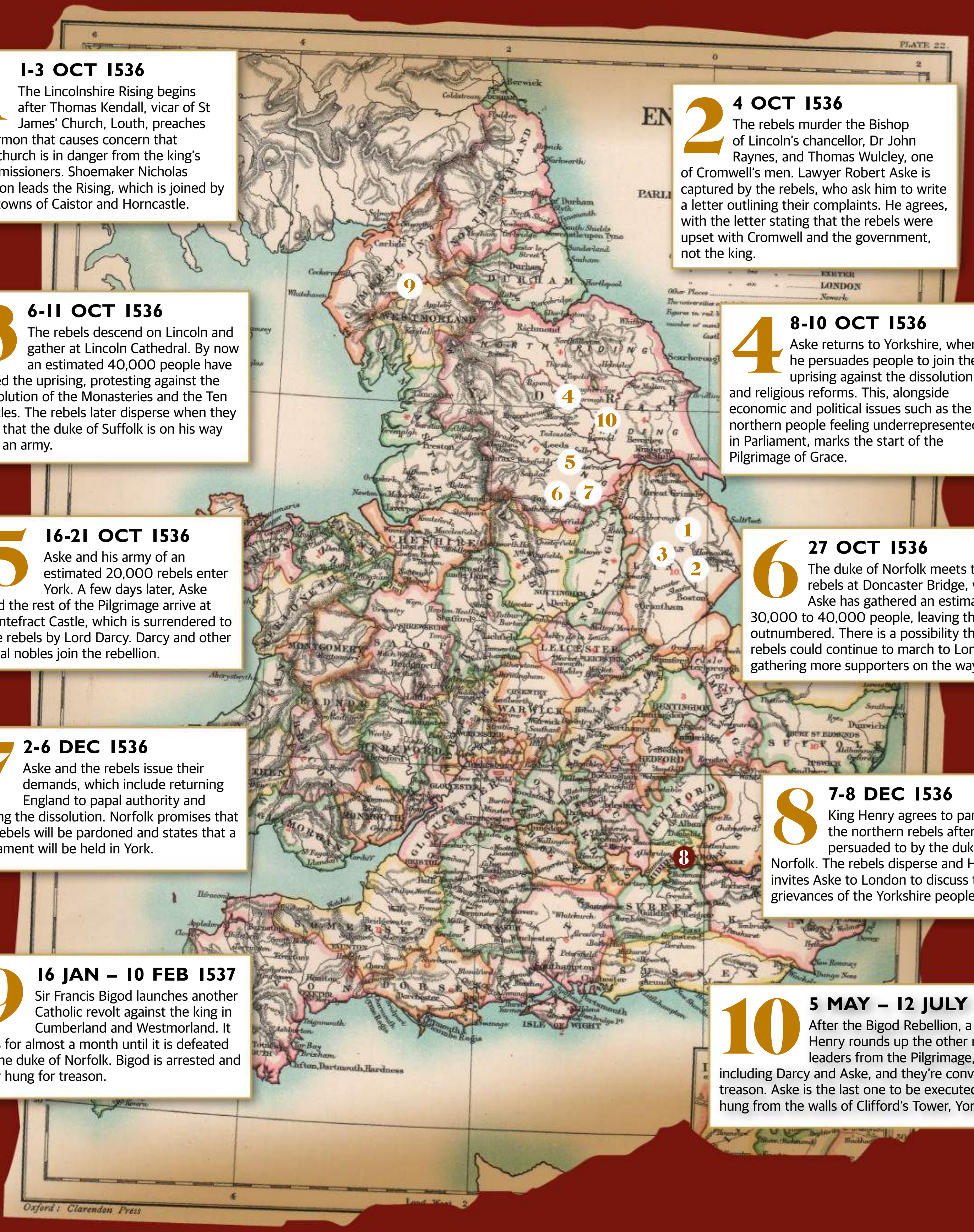
The Pilgrimage of Grace

HOW DID THE GREATEST DOMESTIC THREAT TO THE TUDOR DYNASTY UNFOLD?



1 1-3 OCT 1536

The Lincolnshire Rising begins after Thomas Kendall, vicar of St James' Church, Louth, preaches a sermon that causes concern that the church is in danger from the king's commissioners. Shoemaker Nicholas Melton leads the Rising, which is joined by the towns of Caistor and Horncastle.

2 4 OCT 1536

The rebels murder the Bishop of Lincoln's chancellor, Dr John Raynes, and Thomas Wulcley, one of Cromwell's men. Lawyer Robert Aske is captured by the rebels, who ask him to write a letter outlining their complaints. He agrees, with the letter stating that the rebels were upset with Cromwell and the government, not the king.

3 6-11 OCT 1536

The rebels descend on Lincoln and gather at Lincoln Cathedral. By now an estimated 40,000 people have joined the uprising, protesting against the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Ten Articles. The rebels later disperse when they hear that the duke of Suffolk is on his way with an army.

4 8-10 OCT 1536

Aske returns to Yorkshire, where he persuades people to join the uprising against the dissolution and religious reforms. This, alongside economic and political issues such as the northern people feeling underrepresented in Parliament, marks the start of the Pilgrimage of Grace.

5 16-21 OCT 1536

Aske and his army of an estimated 20,000 rebels enter York. A few days later, Aske and the rest of the Pilgrimage arrive at Pontefract Castle, which is surrendered to the rebels by Lord Darcy. Darcy and other local nobles join the rebellion.

6 27 OCT 1536

The duke of Norfolk meets the rebels at Doncaster Bridge, where Aske has gathered an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 people, leaving the duke outnumbered. There is a possibility that the rebels could continue to march to London, gathering more supporters on the way.

7 2-6 DEC 1536

Aske and the rebels issue their demands, which include returning England to papal authority and ending the dissolution. Norfolk promises that the rebels will be pardoned and states that a Parliament will be held in York.

8 7-8 DEC 1536

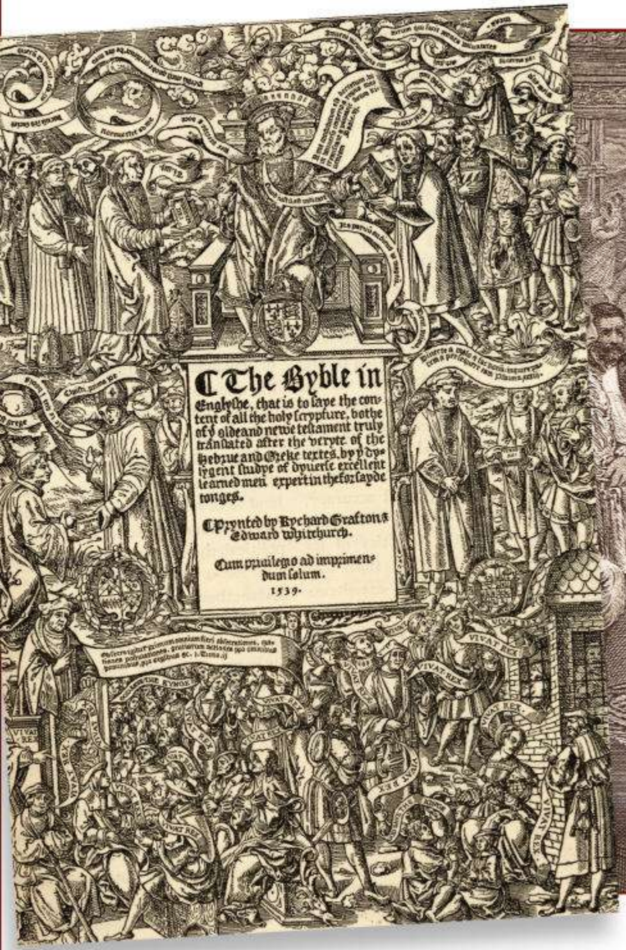
King Henry agrees to pardon the northern rebels after being persuaded to by the duke of Norfolk. The rebels disperse and Henry invites Aske to London to discuss the grievances of the Yorkshire people.

9 16 JAN – 10 FEB 1537

Sir Francis Bigod launches another Catholic revolt against the king in Cumberland and Westmorland. It lasts for almost a month until it is defeated by the duke of Norfolk. Bigod is arrested and later hung for treason.

10 5 MAY – 12 JULY 1537

After the Bigod Rebellion, a furious Henry rounds up the other rebel leaders from the Pilgrimage, including Darcy and Aske, and they're convicted for treason. Aske is the last one to be executed – he is hung from the walls of Clifford's Tower, York.



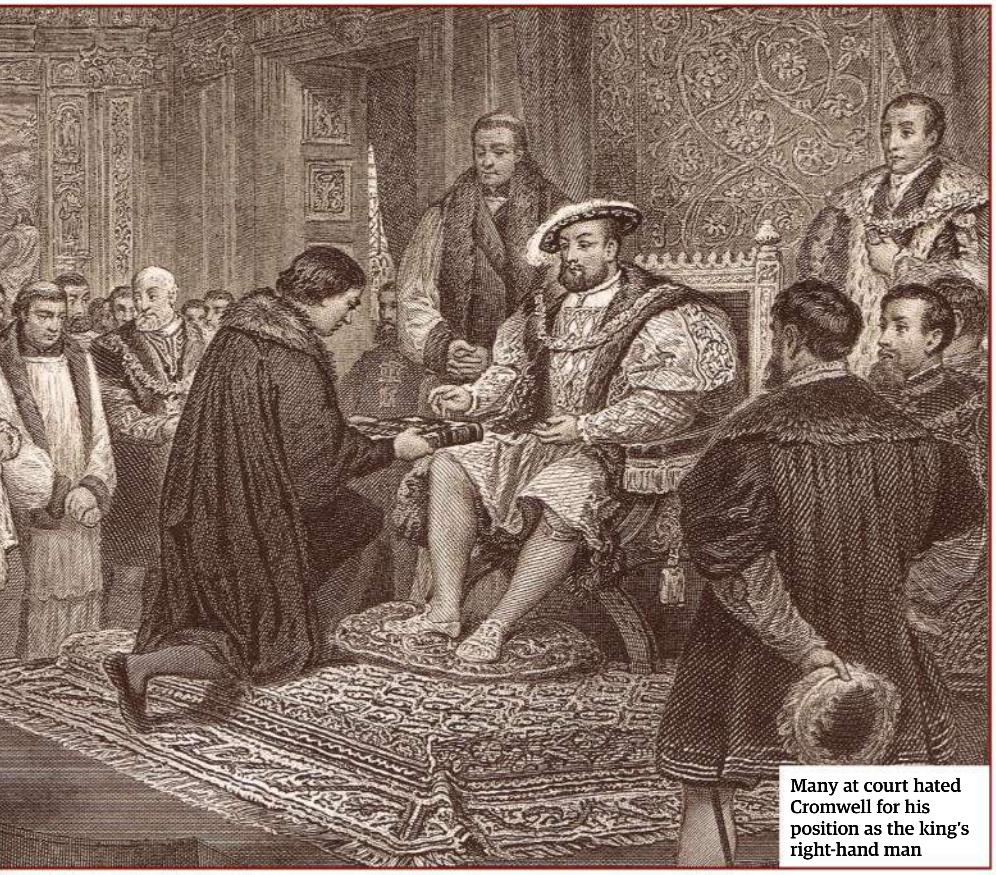
¶ The Byble in
Englyſhe, that is to ſaye the content of all the holy ſcrypture, bothe
of ye olde and newe teſtament truly
tranſlated after the veryte of the
Hebrue and Greke textes, by ye dylygent ſtudye of dyuerſe excellent
learned men, expert in the forſayde
tonges.

¶ Prynted by Rychard Grafton &
Edward Whitchurch.

Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum ſolum.

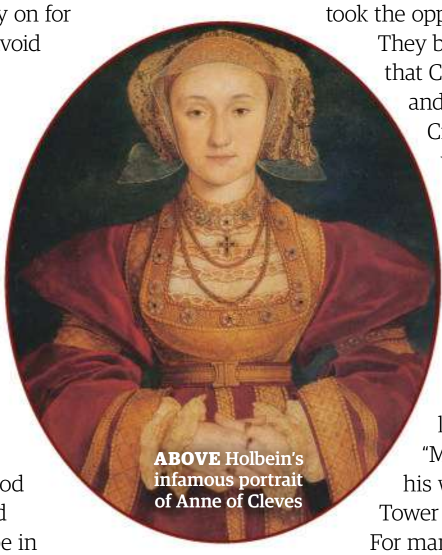
1539.

ABOVE The title page of the first edition of the Great Bible, 1539



Many at court hated Cromwell for his position as the king's right-hand man

son Gregory to marry Elizabeth Seymour, Queen Jane's sister, effectively making him a member of the king's family. Cromwell had risen above his station and his adversaries were waiting to take him down. Less than two weeks after giving birth to Henry's longed-for son, Edward, Jane died in October 1537. The king was grief-stricken but the hunt was already on for his fourth wife. Cromwell wanted to avoid another English bride as this would continue friction at court. Instead, he hoped to forge an anti-Catholic alliance and bring England closer to Protestant Europe. He settled on a German princess, Anne of Cleves, who was an ideal candidate as England was threatened by an alliance between Spain and France. Cromwell pressed the matter to Henry, who famously agreed to the marriage after seeing a portrait of Anne painted by Hans Holbein the Younger. Negotiations were settled and Cromwell was back in Henry's good graces. However, his success crumbled when the king met his new bride-to-be in December 1539. Instantly disgusted, Henry shouted "I like her not! I like her not" at Cromwell and demanded that he get him out of the upcoming marriage.



ABOVE Holbein's infamous portrait of Anne of Cleves

Yet, Henry had no choice but to persist with the marriage on 6 January 1540 and the only way to secure an annulment was to claim that he was unable to consummate the marriage due to impotency. The king was humiliated and furious at the man who had organised the marriage in the first place – Cromwell.

Even though he had angered Henry, Cromwell retained his position and in April he was made the earl of Essex, to the bitter disappointment of his enemies. Nonetheless, Henry had not forgotten what had happened and now Cromwell's enemies, notably the duke of Norfolk and Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, took the opportunity to strike.

They began a whispering campaign against him, claiming that Cromwell was a heretic plotting to rebel against Henry and even marry his daughter, Lady Mary, with whom Cromwell had a close friendship. Henry, by now gripped with paranoia, had Cromwell arrested on the grounds of treason and heresy. Arriving at a meeting of the Privy Council on 10 June 1540 Cromwell was seized by the king's guards, with the duke gleefully tearing off the Order Of The Garter himself. Cromwell was thrown into the Tower but he was not given the chance to stand trial, as a bill of attainder was passed and condemned him to death. He wrote numerous letters to Henry in the hope that he would be pardoned, the last of which ended with Cromwell's desperate plea: "Most gracious prince, I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy." Alas, his words were not enough. Cromwell was executed at Tower Hill on 28 July 1540.

For many, Cromwell was a Machiavellian villain, corrupted by power and greed for money. The truth is he was a complex man and a great statesman who pursued both power and reform. He genuinely wanted and believed in the changes that he was making, which formed the basis of England as a future Protestant nation. Henry later upbraided the Privy Council for Cromwell's death, claiming "upon light pretext, by false accusations, they made him put to death the most faithful servant he ever had" – a testament to Cromwell's enduring loyalty and devotion.

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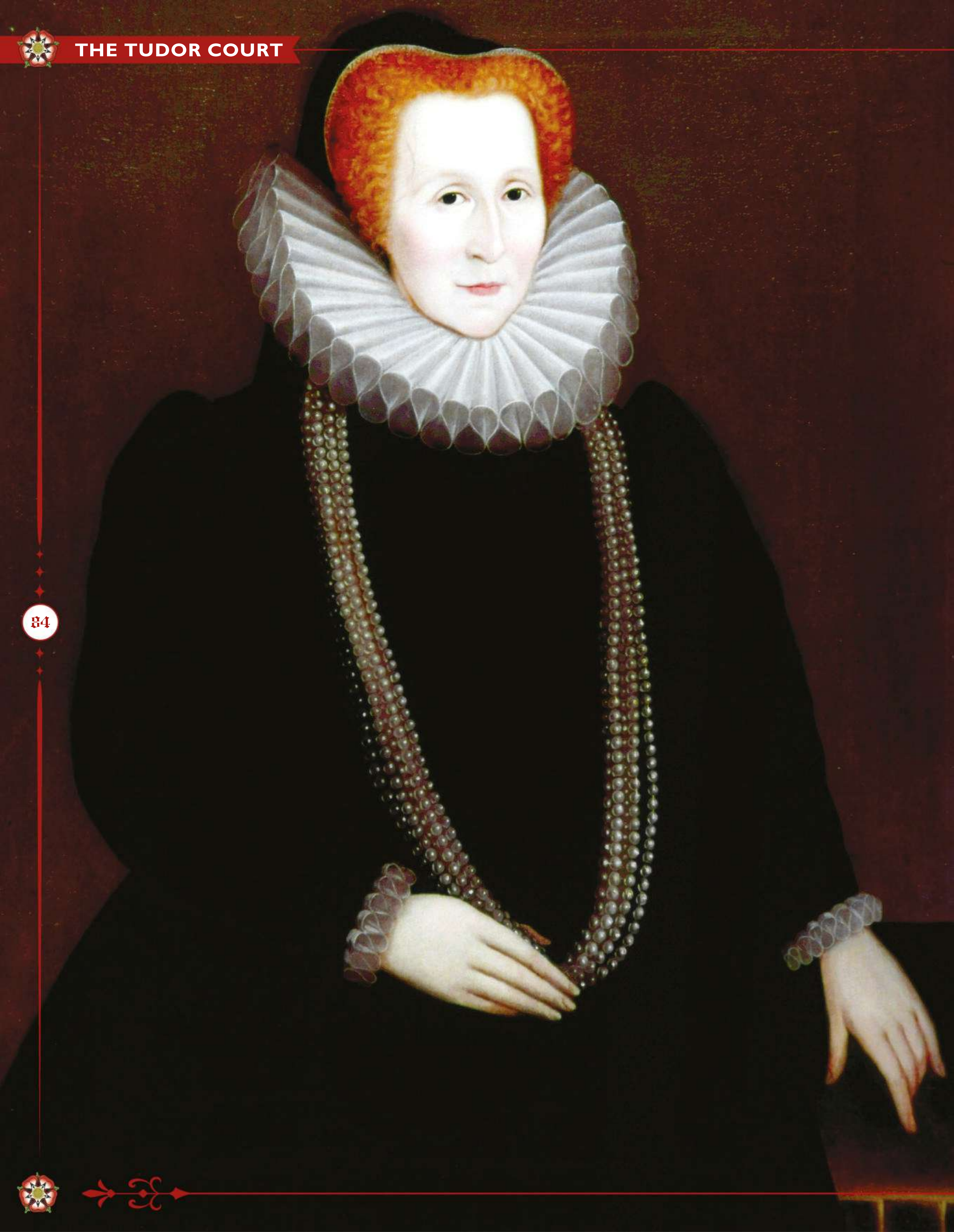


ELIZABETH'S NEMESIS: BESS OF HARDWICK

Who was the ambitious Tudor noblewoman who proved to be a thorn in Gloriana's side?

WRITTEN BY EMILY STANIFORTH

No, that's not a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, although she does look very similar. This fiery red hair, pale skin and haughty expression in fact belong to another of Tudor England's most prominent women. Elizabeth Cavendish, more commonly known as Bess of Hardwick, who led a remarkable life for a woman in the 16th century, enduring tragedy and hardship with a defiant attitude that would see her become the second richest woman in England after Gloriana herself.

But her success was not straightforward and many of her calculated decisions put her at odds with Queen Elizabeth, making her life precarious and, at times, dangerous. However, even before Elizabeth became queen in 1558, Bess was striving to better her life. From as young as 16 she began building her individual wealth and forging connections with the rich and powerful.

FROM MODEST BEGINNINGS

Bess was born Elizabeth Hardwick sometime between 1521 and 1527 to parents John Hardwick and Elizabeth Leeke. The family estate at the time of Bess' birth was Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, a humble manor house that had been the Hardwick family property since the 13th century. Though their estate had lots of land, the family finances were not as healthy as their holdings would suggest and when Bess' father died in 1528 the situation worsened. Bess only had one brother out of her six siblings, and he was two at the time of his father's death. Therefore, as the law dictated at the time, young James Hardwick became a ward of the king. A third of John Hardwick's wealth eventually passed to hiswidow and the other two thirds was held by the Court.

Now supporting her four daughters (one had died after her father's death), Elizabeth Hardwick remarried. Biographies of Bess suggest that at around the age of 12 she was sent away to live in the home of a family of higher standing. There Bess had better marriage prospects than if she had remained at home. At around age 15, she married her first husband. Robert Barlow was a member of the gentry and was only 13 at the time of their union. However, the marriage would not last long as Barlow died around a year after their wedding. Bess had outlived her first husband.

THE BLACK WIDOW

The death of Bess' first husband was the beginning of a pattern, with all of her husbands dying before her. Though this sounds like a series of tragedies for Bess, and on a personal level it almost certainly was, the deaths of her subsequent husbands would help Bess reach a level of wealth and status that was extraordinary for a woman of her time.

After being widowed for the first time, Bess' next marriage saw her paired with an older man. At 20 years her senior, Sir William Cavendish was quite the catch in terms of securing Bess a place in Tudor high society. It is likely that they first met while Bess was employed as a lady-in-waiting to Lady Frances Grey, the Marchioness of Dorset and niece of Henry VIII. Cavendish was a politician and had been a familiar face at the court of Henry VIII. In his role as a clerk to the king's influential chief minister Thomas Cromwell, and commissioner of the king during the Dissolution

© Alamy

of the Monasteries, William Cavendish was a well-connected man of means.

The marriage of Bess and William Cavendish seems to have been a happy one. In the ten years they were married, Bess gave birth to eight children. Bess and William, both intent on climbing the social ladder of the Tudor upper classes, shrewdly chose each child influential godparents, including several members of the Grey family who were cousins of the Tudors, creating a web of connections at the Tudor court that could prove beneficial in theirs or their children's later lives. Young Henry Cavendish, the couple's third child and first son, became the godson of Princess Elizabeth. Though it was not a foregone conclusion at the time of Henry's birth in 1550 that Elizabeth would one day inherit the throne, she was the half-sister of the reigning king Edward VI and thus a very high ranking woman indeed. Bess clearly saw the advantages that a closer proximity to the royal princess held. There appeared to be no bad blood between Bess and Elizabeth in their younger years.

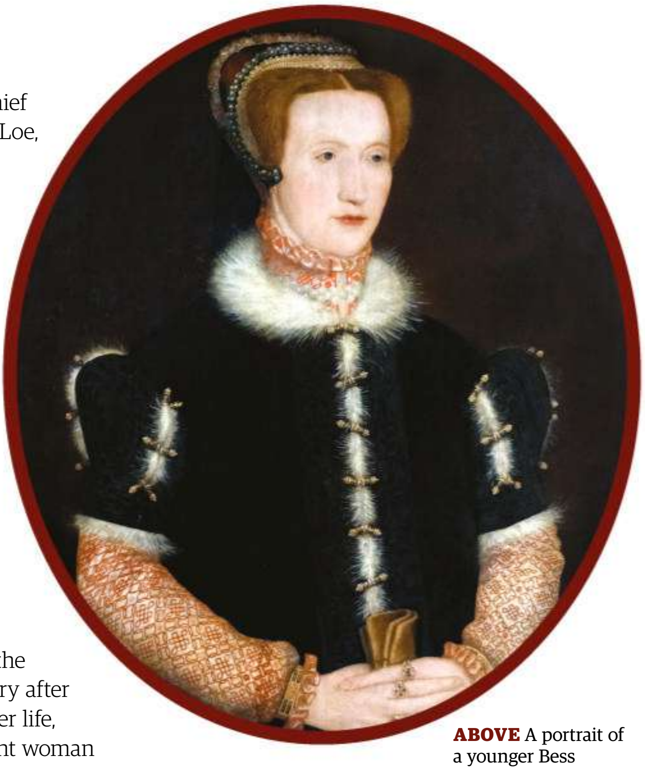
For the majority of their marriage, Bess and William lived together in Derbyshire. Soon after their wedding, Bess had convinced her husband to sell his own lands and use his fortune to purchase Chatsworth Manor in her home county. This decision shows the kind of woman that Bess was: though William was her superior in age and status, it is clear that Bess was not about to let herself and her desires be walked over to appease her husband. Together, the pair financed and oversaw extensive work on the Chatsworth estate.

Unfortunately, Bess' second husband died in 1557, just ten years into their marriage. At the time of his death, Bess inherited her deceased husband's debts and two years later she married her third husband Sir William St Loe. St Loe's prosperous financial status would certainly have been an attractive prospect to the indebted Bess, and his status within the royal court would also surely have interested her. With Mary I having died in 1558, her younger sister, Elizabeth, had inherited the Crown. St Loe was rewarded for previous loyalty he had shown to Elizabeth and appointed Captain of the Guard and Chief Butler of England. Bess' marriage to St Loe, therefore, put her firmly in Elizabeth's circle of trusted friends, allies and advisors. She was made a lady of the bedchamber to the queen shortly after her marriage. However, Bess' ambition and close associations with the troublesome Grey family would see any potential friendship begin to sour.

St Loe died in 1565, leaving Bess the entirety of his vast estate. There have been various estimates as to the extent of Bess' personal wealth after the death of her third husband, with most approximations suggesting that her annual income would have amounted to upwards of £17 million in today's money. She was the second wealthiest woman in the country after the queen herself. From this point in her life, Bess could have lived as an independent woman if she had wished to do so. But, Bess' resources also gave her power, making her a threatening presence for the queen. Bess' decision to marry for a fourth and final time could have been due to the fact that she had recently found herself in hot water with the queen, and had been dismissed from her position at court.

ELIZABETH VS ELIZABETH

Bess' continued friendship with the Grey family was behind her first run-in with Queen Elizabeth. Lady Katherine Grey was Elizabeth's cousin and, according to the will of Henry VIII, was a serious contender and possible legitimate heir to the throne. Therefore, Elizabeth kept an eye on Katherine's activities and so when she married without royal permission, Queen Elizabeth was furious. This was bad news for Bess because, as a confidante of Katherine, she allegedly knew of the marriage and had failed to bring it to the attention of the queen. There are conflicting contemporary accounts of the punishment Bess received for her betrayal of the queen, with one having stated

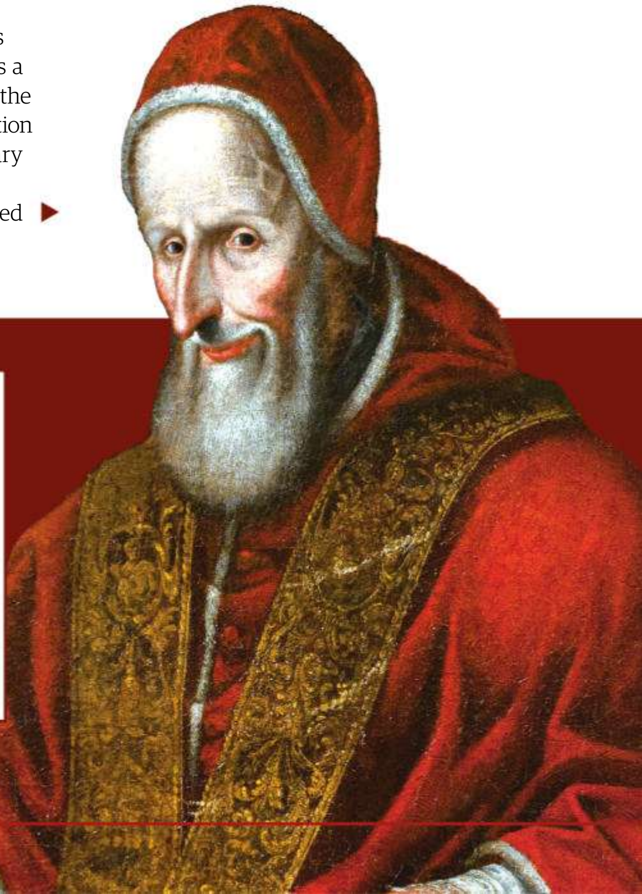

ABOVE A portrait of a younger Bess

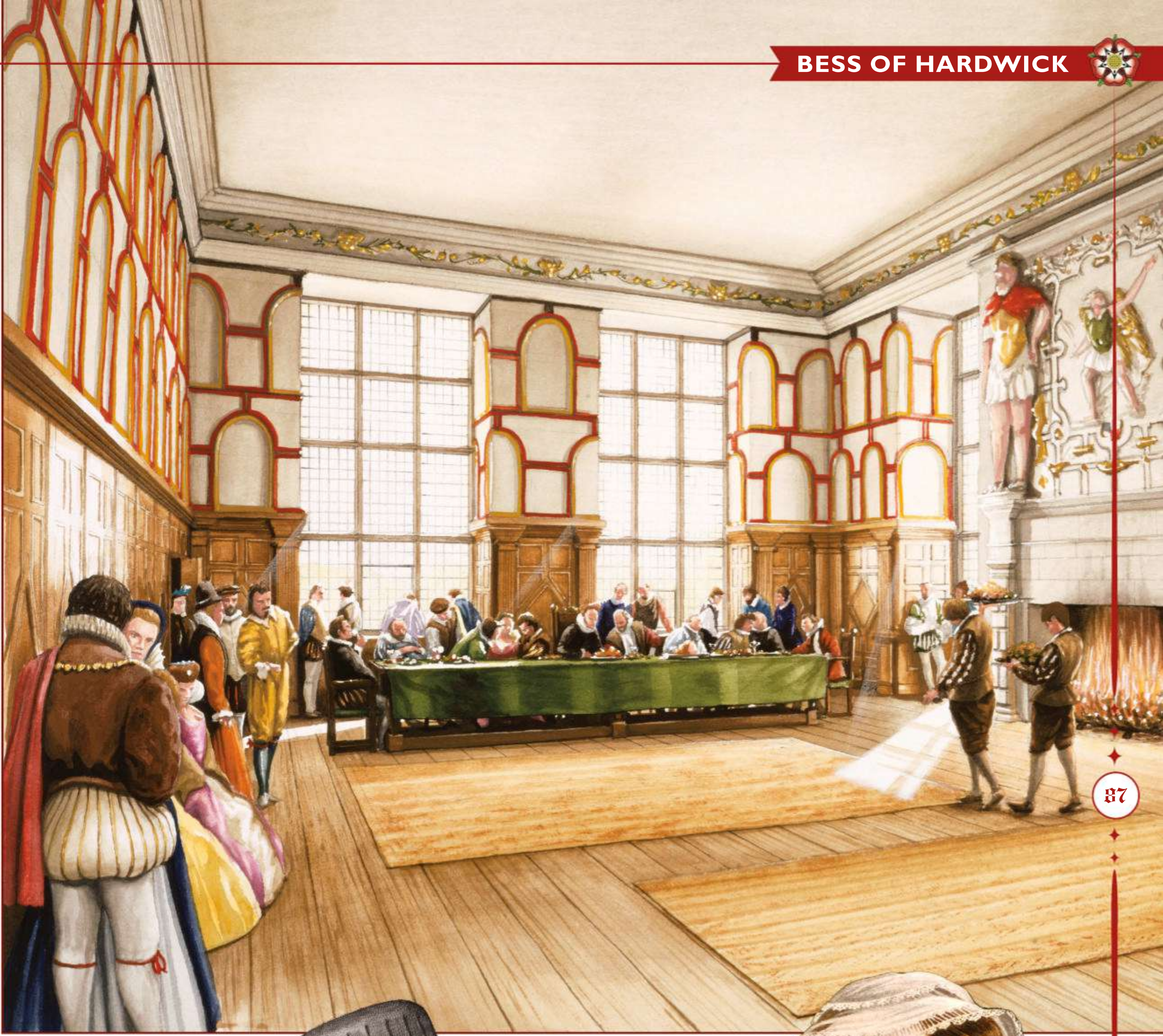
"Bess clearly saw the advantages that a closer proximity to the royal princess held"

More of Elizabeth's enemies

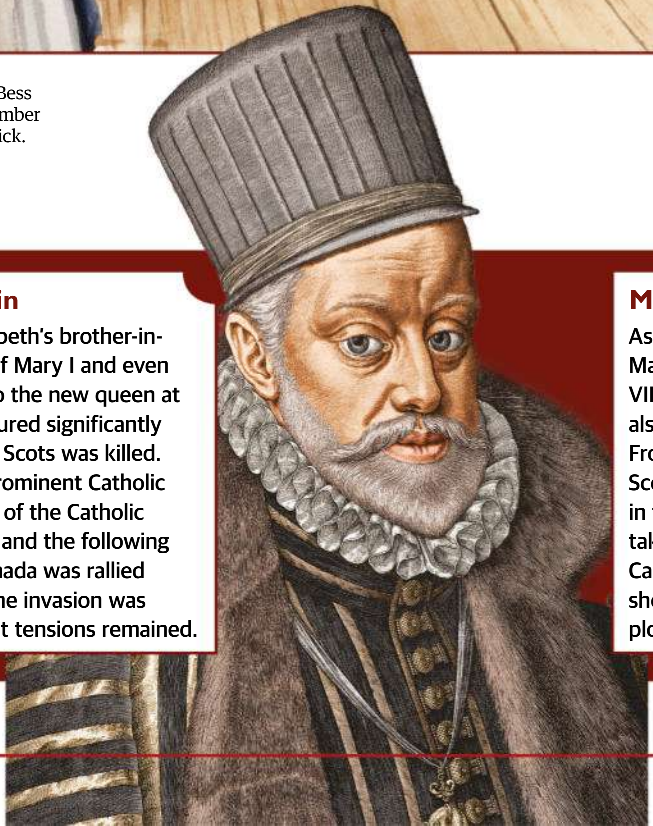
Pope Pius V

In 1570, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth I, branding her a heretic, through a Papal Bull. While Elizabeth was a Protestant and so likely unmoved personally by such a move, it was intended to tell English Catholics that they should hold no loyalty to the Tudor queen and, potentially, should consider her illegitimate. Parliament rallied around the monarch, however, passing acts in 1571 to criminalise challenges to the queen's authority.



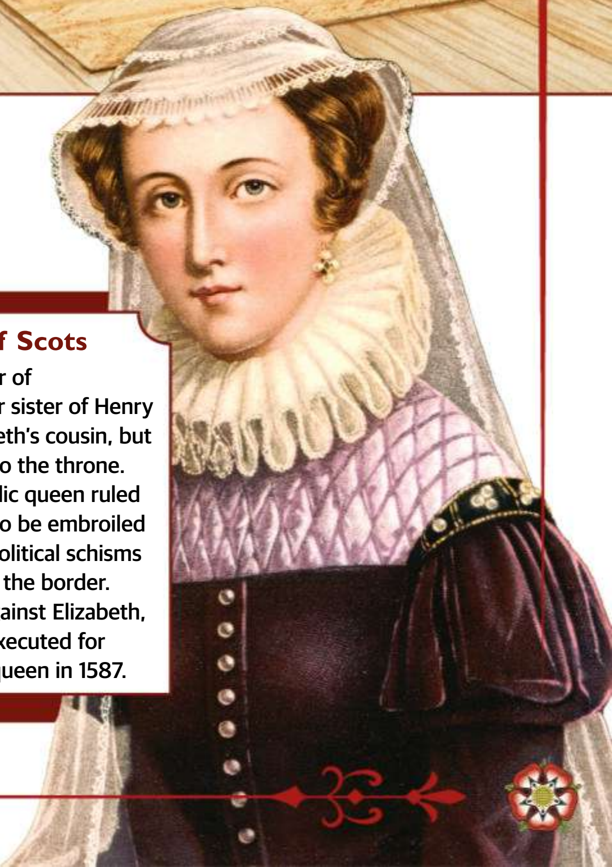


ABOVE A recreation of Bess hosting in the Great Chamber of the Old Hall at Hardwick.



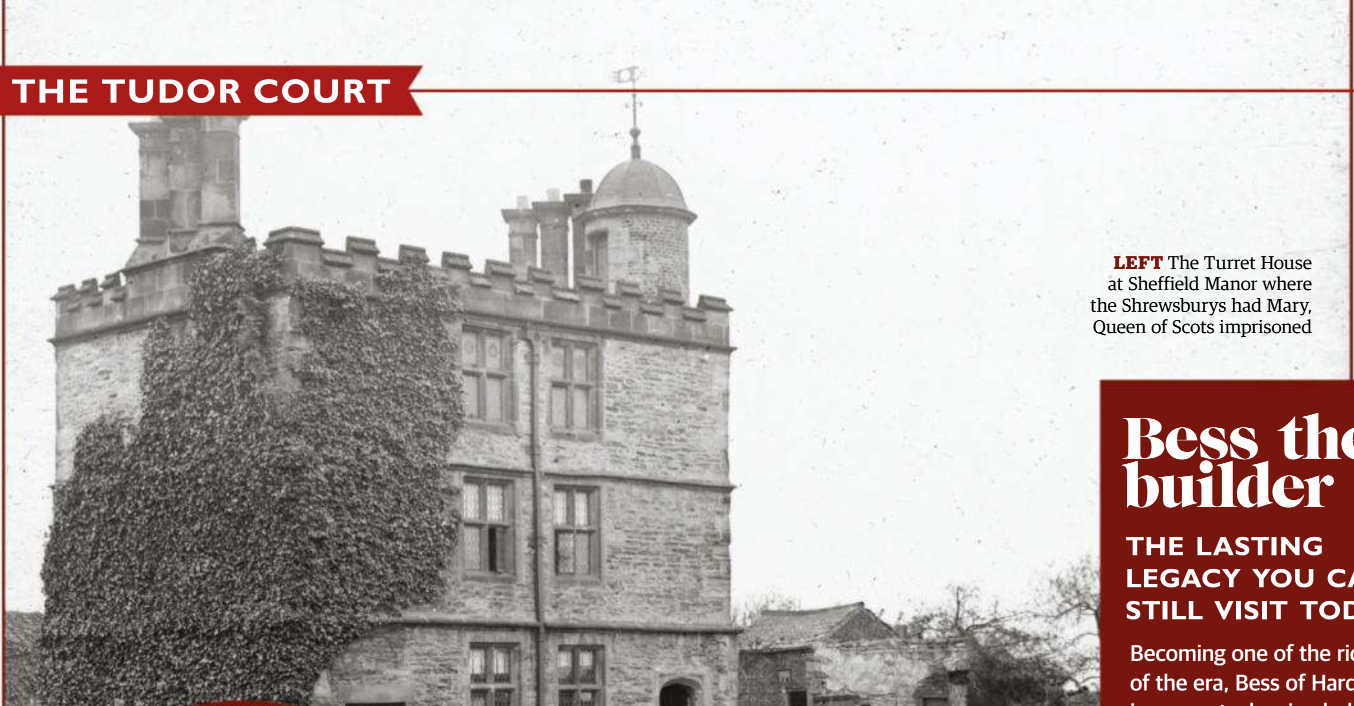
Philip II of Spain

Philip had been Elizabeth's brother-in-law as the husband of Mary I and even proposed marriage to the new queen at first, but relations soured significantly after Mary, Queen of Scots was killed. The execution of a prominent Catholic royal drew the wrath of the Catholic superpower of Spain and the following year the Spanish Armada was rallied to invade England. The invasion was famously averted, but tensions remained.

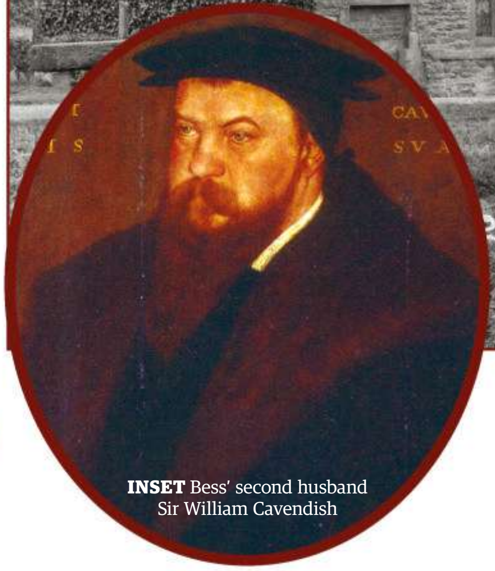


Mary, Queen of Scots

As the granddaughter of Margaret Tudor, older sister of Henry VIII, Mary was Elizabeth's cousin, but also a potential heir to the throne. From 1561, the Catholic queen ruled Scotland and began to be embroiled in the religious and political schisms taking place south of the border. Caught up in plots against Elizabeth, she was eventually executed for plotting against the queen in 1587.



LEFT The Turret House at Sheffield Manor where the Shrewsburys had Mary, Queen of Scots imprisoned



INSET Bess' second husband Sir William Cavendish

that Bess was thrown into the Tower of London alongside Katherine. However, another source tells us that while the queen was angry with Bess, questioned her and dismissed her as a lady of the bedchamber, her rage eventually subsided and Bess faced no further consequences.

Either way, Bess' involvement in such a scandal may have prompted her to seek out a marital match that would help to bolster her reputation. With her last husband, she hit the jackpot – George Talbot was a bona fide English aristocrat with an impressive lineage. He was also the 6th Earl of Shrewsbury and so by marriage Bess became a countess. This new match put Bess back in the game and soon her and her husband were trusted with a matter of the utmost importance to the queen. After Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth's cousin and rival to the throne, had been forced to abdicate her Scottish throne and been accused of aspiring to take the English Crown for herself in 1568, the queen entrusted custodianship of Mary to the Earl of Shrewsbury, and therefore Bess. Mary was effectively kept under house arrest by Shrewsbury at his and Bess' homes, including Bess' beloved Chatsworth as well as Sheffield Manor.

The marriage between Bess and the Earl suffered as a result of Mary's placement with them. Both parties struggled with the financial strain the responsibility put on them, as well as the pressure the role inevitably brought with it. Proximity to the deposed Scottish queen was precarious, and with Bess having already been questioned once for betraying the Virgin Queen, walking the tightrope between spending a lot of individual time with Mary, which could give rise to gossip, while simultaneously staying on the right side of Elizabeth, cannot have been easy for either party. The pair became distant from one another and the situation was made worse when Bess' scheming put her at odds with the queen once again.

Already aware of Elizabeth's reactions to unsanctioned marriages, Bess nevertheless sought to wed her daughter, Elizabeth Cavendish, to Charles Stuart, the brother of Mary, Queen of Scots' second husband and uncle to her son James VI of Scotland. The marriage went ahead in secret in 1574 but, of course, the queen found out. Enraged by the actions of the newlyweds' mothers for arranging the match, Elizabeth had Stuart's mother, Margaret Douglas, imprisoned in the Tower of London. Again there are conflicting accounts of what exactly happened to Bess and it is possible that she too was thrown into the Tower for a period. Having trusted Bess to guard Mary, Queen of Scots, the betrayal and deceit must have been a slap in the face for the queen. It does not seem as though Shrewsbury had been aware of his wife's clandestine matchmaking.

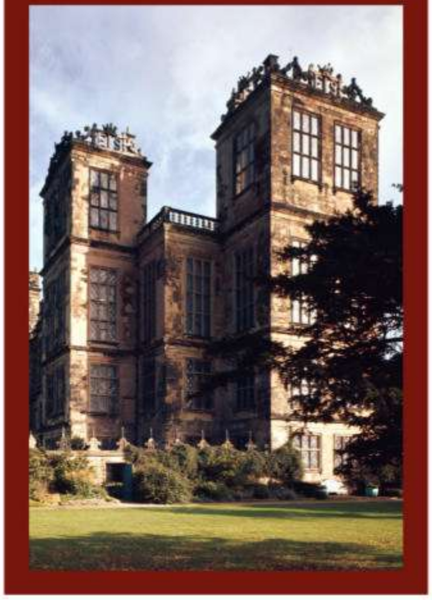
Elizabeth Cavendish and Charles Stuart had a single child: a daughter named Arbella. Arbella Stuart's existence was a threat to Elizabeth I's

Bess the builder

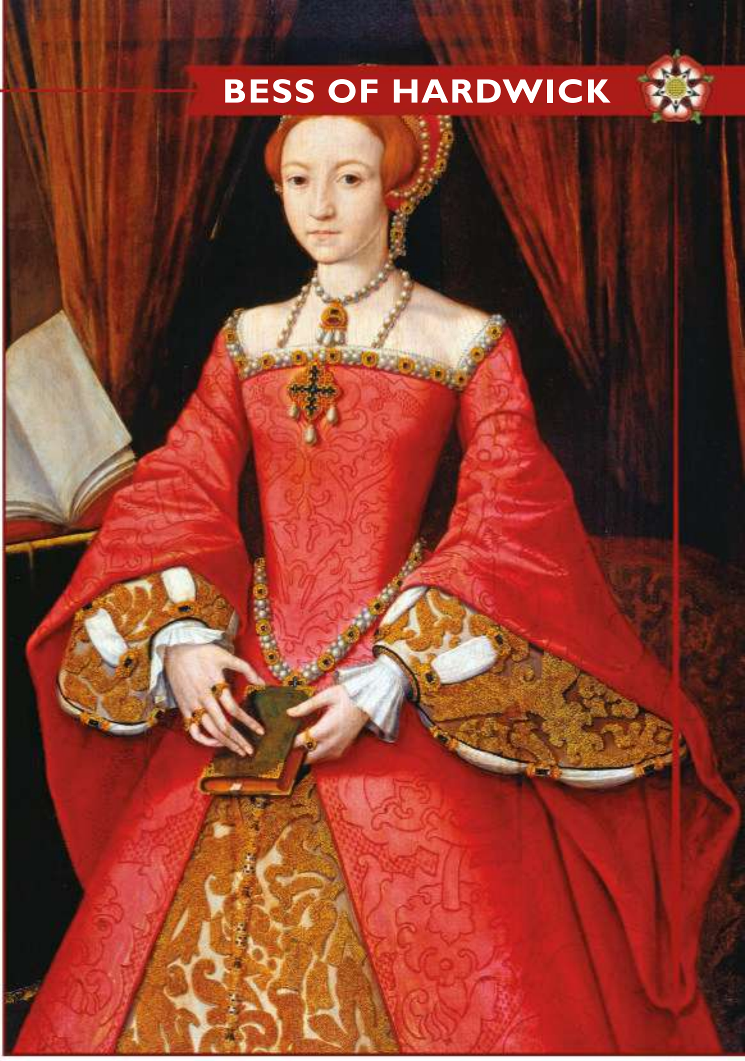
THE LASTING LEGACY YOU CAN STILL VISIT TODAY

Becoming one of the richest women of the era, Bess of Hardwick invested in property, leaving behind two buildings that survive to this day and are incredible examples of Tudor architecture. In 1549 she bought the Chatsworth estate in Derbyshire, with her then husband Sir William Cavendish. In her subsequent marriages, Bess retained control of this estate and financed significant remodelling projects to make it what it is today.

Having moved back to Chatsworth from 1584 as her fourth marriage broke up, she then decided to return to her birthplace of Hardwick in Derbyshire where her family had a modest estate. This was gradually transformed into Hardwick Hall as we know it now, starting with an enlarged manor in 1590. After her husband died, she invested her increased inheritance on further building, including a new hall, completed in 1599, with impressive windows. The old and new halls were in development together, allowing for a complementary design.



INSET Bess' impressive collection of tapestries and portraits still line the walls of the Long Gallery at Hardwick Hall



RIGHT Bess made Princess Elizabeth the godmother to one of her children

BELOW The ruins of Old Hardwick Hall, where Bess was born, overlooking the New Hall which she began building in 1590.

throne as she was a descendent (through her father's line) of Henry VII and thus a prime candidate to be named as Elizabeth's successor, or even her replacement. With ambitious Bess as a grandmother, however, Arbella's life was focused on becoming a suitable heir. Elizabeth therefore continued to keep an eye on Bess' aspirations for her grandchild, particularly when she became Arbella's guardian after both of her parents died. Bess, from that point, was never not under suspicion. Her ambition for her granddaughter, however, did not sit well with Arbella who grew to resent the way her grandmother treated her. When Elizabeth died in 1603, it was James VI of Scotland who succeeded the Virgin Queen and so Bess' vision never came to be. The relationship between Arbella and Bess continued to deteriorate until Bess eventually disinherited her.

A LASTING LEGACY

Bess of Hardwick achieved an extraordinary amount for a woman in Tudor England. Though her relationship with the Earl of Shrewsbury soured and she moved out of their shared home in 1584 to Chatsworth, she continued to aspire to great things. She purchased the land of her old family home at Hardwick from her brother in 1583 and set about completing a project that would cement her legacy as a powerful woman. She began to transform Hardwick manor house into a grand and modern home, which is now known as Hardwick Old Hall. The Earl of Shrewsbury died in 1590 and Bess inherited his wealth. As a result, she expanded her architectural ambitions and built a new home on the grounds of Hardwick. Hardwick Hall was completed in 1597 and is one of the finest country houses from the Tudor era to still exist. It remains her greatest visible legacy - a visual representation of her wealth, status and ambition. To ensure everyone knew that she was the owner and builder of such an impressive house, Bess had the initials ES for Elizabeth of Shrewsbury carved into Hardwick's facade.

Although Bess' attempt to have her descendent on the English throne was never realised in her own lifetime, she did have a lasting impact on English royal lineage. Through her son, Charles Cavendish, Bess is a direct ancestor of the late Queen Elizabeth II, another exceptional and defiant woman who shares her name.

Bess was lucky in that she was never dealt with more harshly by Elizabeth, but she surely proved to be a dangerous foe and a worthy opponent of the Tudor Queen. If it was not for Bess' far-reaching aspirations, it is possible that the two women may even have been friends who admired one another. But Bess' headstrong nature would never have been content with a place in the background of history. As a woman who negotiated and navigated her way through a turbulent political environment from poverty to becoming England's richest noblewoman, she was a force to be reckoned with.

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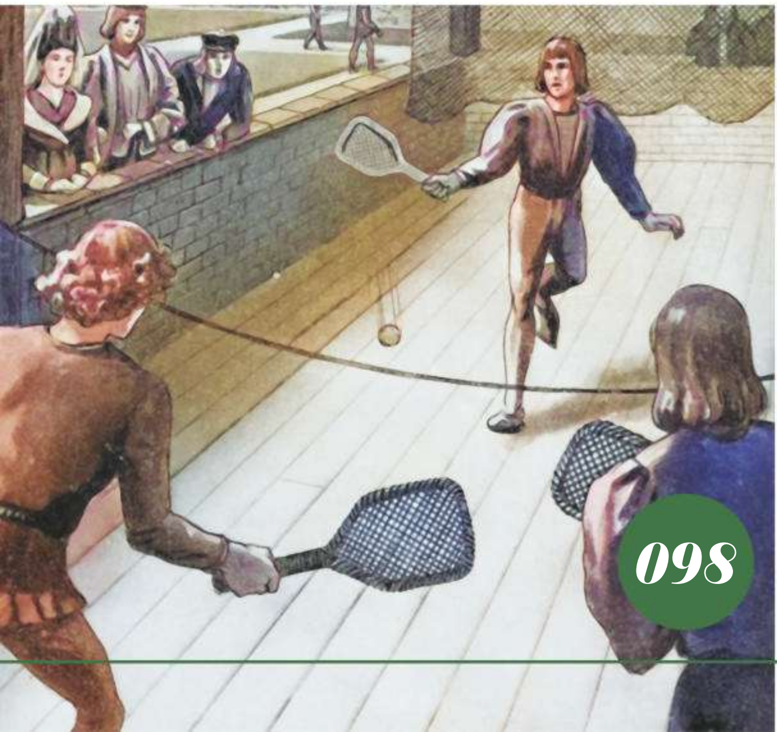

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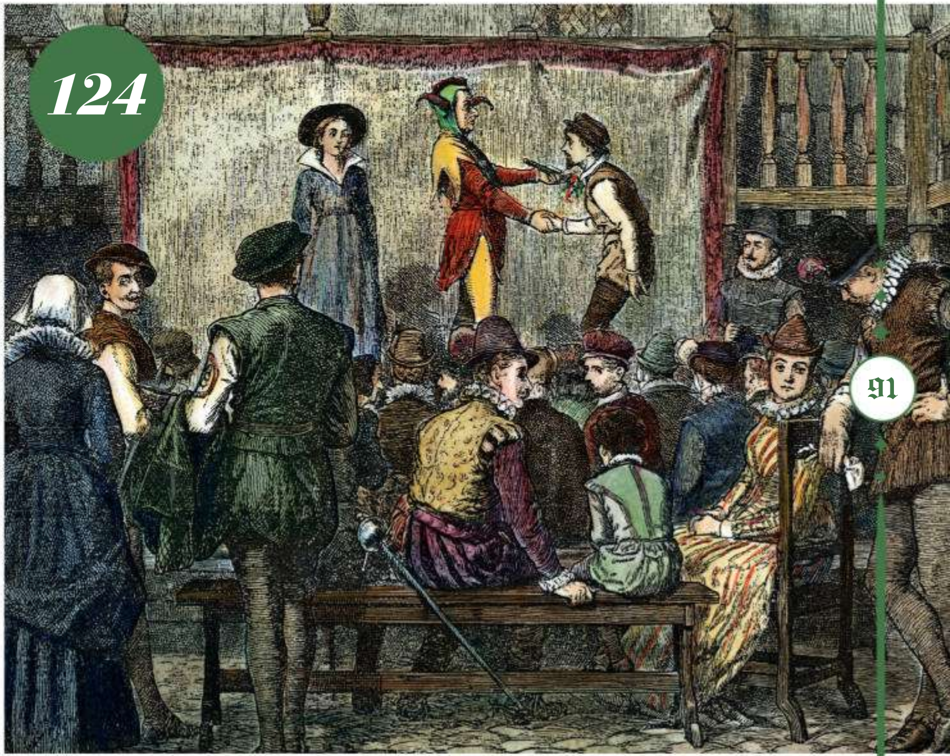

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TALES OF TUDOR MEDICINE

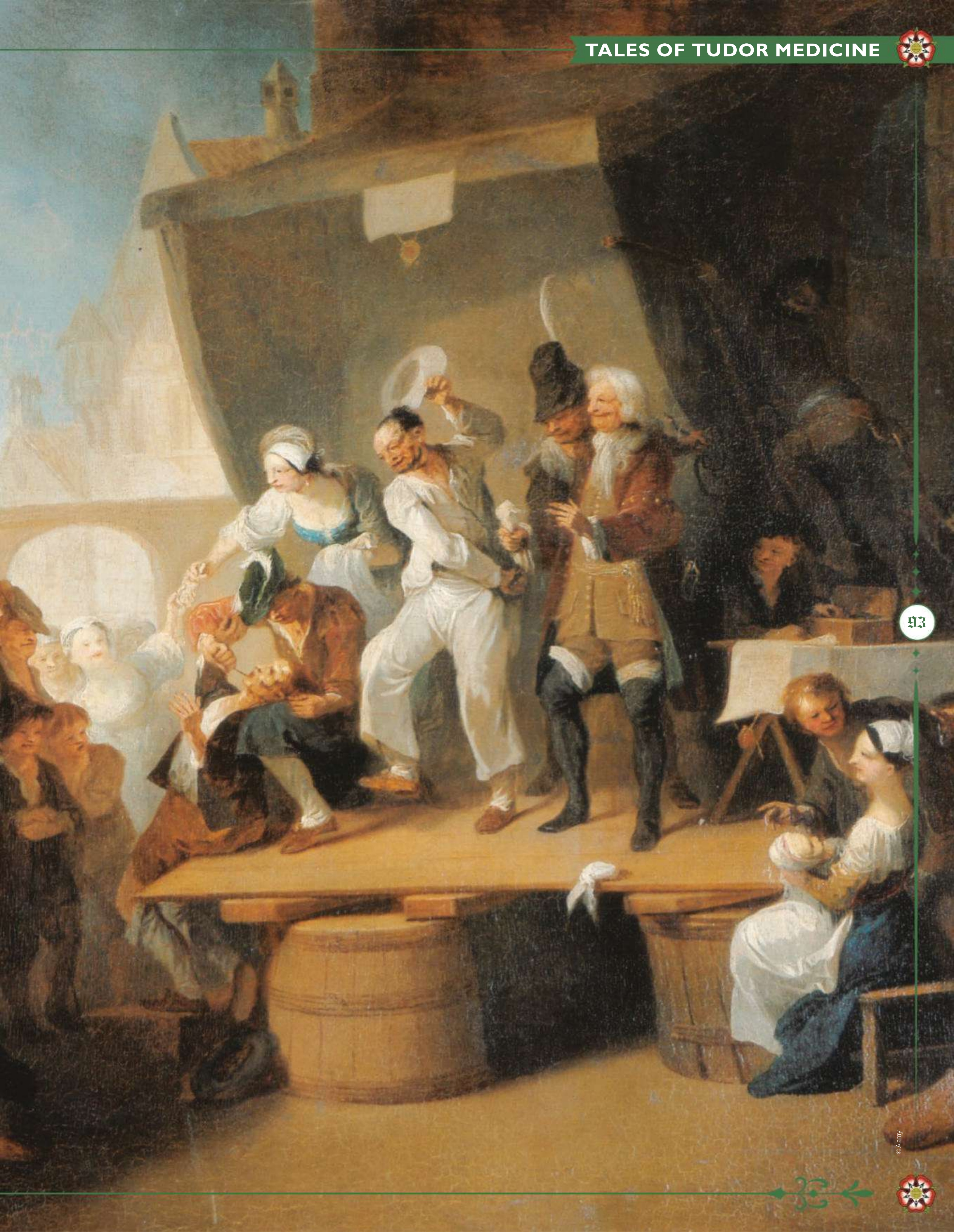
In Tudor England, a toothache, a gangrenous finger and an excess of blood would be dealt with by the same man who cut your hair – the barber-surgeon

The average life expectancy in Tudor England was about 35 years, and of all those born, somewhere between a third and half died before they reached 16. Life could be a short, brutish struggle, especially for those born without wealth or privilege, but if they managed to survive to their late teens, then the chances were good that they would make it to their 50th or even 60th birthday. And just like nowadays, some people in Tudor England even lived to their 70s or 80s. For the most part, however, people were losing a war against sickness and disease that they barely understood, let alone knew how to fight effectively.

It wasn't until after James Stewart took the throne, closing the Tudor period, that William Harvey's theory of blood circulating around the body in a closed system gained a foothold in medical science; or that Athanasius Kircher started researching disease using a microscope; or that Robert Hooke discovered cells, leading Antonie van Leeuwenhoek to discover bacteria. Just a generation or two before in the Tudor period, the revolutions in medical science were only just starting to gain pace, and most people believed that your astrological sign, your adherence to the advice of a poem and the composition of your urine were the real diagnostic tools. They were damnably dirty days, too.

Timber and whitewashed wattle-and-daub walls pressed into each other over the roads of towns and cities, forming arched roofs over the stinking streets and enclosing the stench. Citizens slopped their night-buckets out into the open sewers beneath, which drained along channels thick with lice, fleas and black rats, dragging discarded and rotting rubbish with them. The physician John Snow wouldn't be born until 1813, and until his ground-breaking research on the Broad Street cholera epidemic in London and its spread through the water pumps was published, no one would know that all this infected liquid was permeating and poisoning the wells, creating hotspots of infection that seemed like cursed neighbourhoods to the stricken populace. Tudor England was woefully ignorant of effective sanitation – many believed that bathing was dangerous, opening the pores to malevolent miasma (bad air) that would make them sick – and people instead followed the guidance of, chiefly, learned doctors, local wise women and a very multi-skilled kind of surgeon.

Favoured by Henry VIII and those who could afford them were the physicians, who were gentlemen, academics and costly. Henry himself was very interested in medicine, founding the Royal College of Physicians in 1518, merging the Company of Barbers and Fellowship of Surgeons into a single company in 1540 and passing several other acts of parliament ▶



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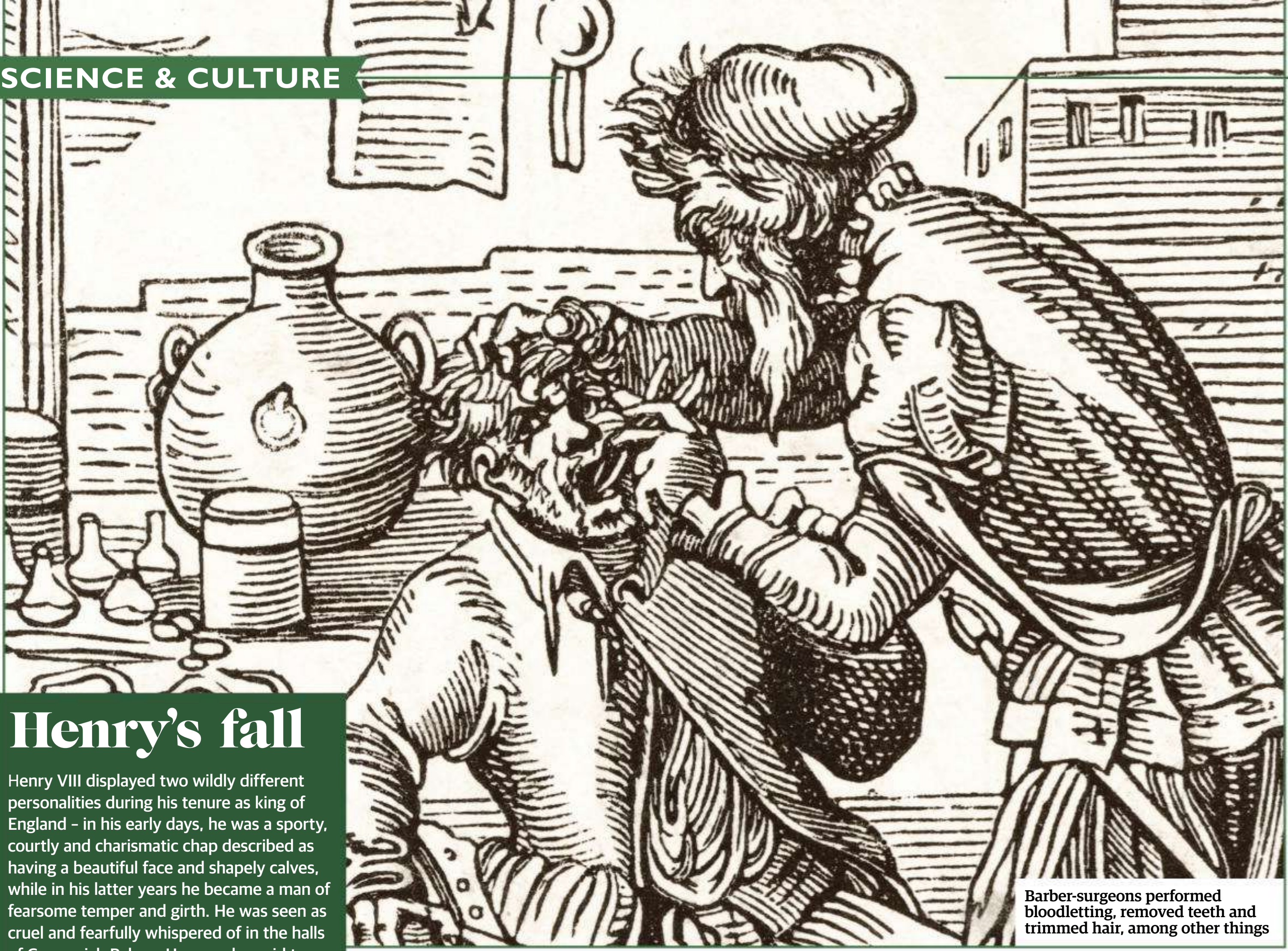

Barber-surgeons performed bloodletting, removed teeth and trimmed hair, among other things

Henry's fall

Henry VIII displayed two wildly different personalities during his tenure as king of England – in his early days, he was a sporty, courtly and charismatic chap described as having a beautiful face and shapely calves, while in his latter years he became a man of fearsome temper and girth. He was seen as cruel and fearfully whispered of in the halls of Greenwich Palace. He was also said to stink in his later years – apparently he could be smelt from three rooms away.

Historians believe there is a connection between Henry's health and his shift in personality. Henry began life in excellent health and was renowned for his athletic pursuits, among which were wrestling, tennis and jousting. However, he may have contracted smallpox aged 23 and definitely picked up malaria at some point in his 20s, which was to exacerbate his struggle with the leg ulcers he later developed. The first recorded mention of his ulcers comes in 1527, when he was 36 – shortly after recovering from a tennis injury that left his foot so swollen he took to wearing a single, loose velvet slipper. Henry was afflicted with a "sorre legge" for the rest of his life. When he was 44, he suffered a terrible jousting accident that threw him to the ground and saw his armoured horse land on top of him. He was "without speech" (unconscious) for two hours, and one of the ulcers tore open. This ulcer left Henry in chronic pain for the rest of his life, and physicians insisted on keeping the wound open in order to drain it of excessive humours – actually stitching the skin back and inserting gold pellets into the wound to keep it open while it drained. Unable to exercise and racked with pain, Henry's waist ballooned further, and he developed a filthy temper. Historians note that his cycles of marriage and divorce sped up after the accident, as did the number of executions he ordered, and by the time he died 12 years later, his legs were so infected he had to be carried around on a chair.

throughout his reign that established licensing regulations for medical practitioners. These would stand for the next three centuries. He even had an early insight into the spread of disease, long before Snow, that led him to implement quarantines during the later plague years and introduce basic disinfection, as well as attempt to improve the sewers and water supplies. But he always trusted his physicians and their intuitive, though often incorrect, ideas – they were the experts, after all.

Specialists existed, too. Since the Black Death had arrived in Europe during the 14th century, pandemics had re-occurred over the years and created a new class of physicians – plague doctors. Thickly robed from head to toe, the plague doctor would enter a patient's chamber with a pungent air of herbs and oils, cloying bundles of clove, camphor, laudanum and bergamot hanging from pouches at their waist to protect against miasma, and amulets worn around the neck and waist to ward off sickness. They were always gloved and carried a cane so they wouldn't have to touch their patients during examinations, and wore a striking, beaked mask with glass lenses sewn in to see through; the beak was an air filter, filled with another heady mix of aromatics. Though they didn't understand it for the right reasons, some of these precautions were successful and helped the plague doctors dodge death.

Most physicians were less adventurously attired, however, and instead emerged from seven years of study – often overseas at the esteemed medical college Salerno – in stiff suits, bearing astrological charts to determine which kinds of medicines and incisions should be avoided based upon astrological signs. They would mentally consult and then recite lines of the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum (The Salernitan Code Of Health)*, an archaic anthology of medical advice in poetic form that was an authoritative textbook at the time, translated into dozens of languages and hugely popular because of its memorable rhymes dispensing such sage advice as this:

Of Pork
Inferior far to lamb is flesh of swine,
Unqualified by gen'rous draughts of wine;
But add the wine, and lo! you'll quickly find
In them both food and medicine combined.

And also this more pertinent verse:

Of the Four Humours in the Human Body
Four humours form the body in this style,
Atrabilis, Blood, Phlegm and yellow Bile.
With earth atrabilis may well compare,
Consuming fire with bile, and blood with air.
Blood is moist, warm, and vital as the air;
While phlegm is cold, through water's copius share;
Bile burns like fire, where'er it flows along;
Gall, dry and cool, to earth bears likeness strong.

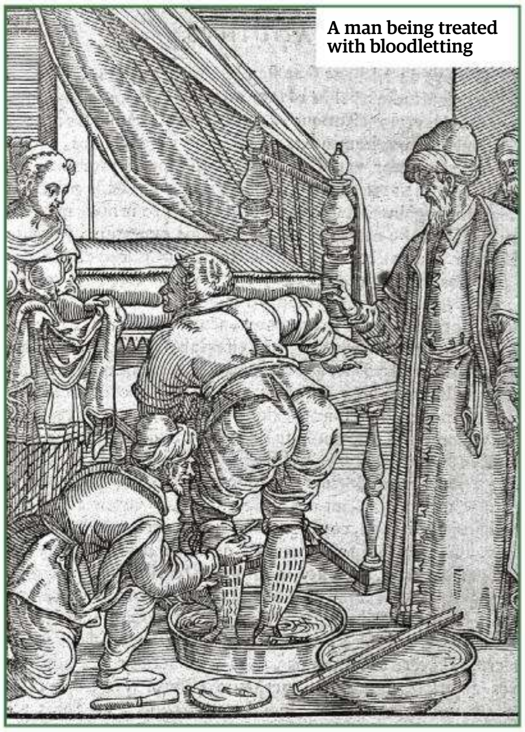
This, essentially, was the core of medical thinking in Tudor England, and it all went back to an Ancient Greek scholar called Galen. He was a consolidator of medical knowledge in his time, gathering all that he learned and dictating his books to teams of scribes. Galen was so prolific that, despite much of his work being destroyed, his writings represent almost half of all the Ancient-Greek texts we have today. His theories were lost for a time after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire as Galen's work, which had not been translated into Latin during the days of the empire, fell into obscurity in the west. Some of his works had been exported to and survived in the east, though, and were later rediscovered in Europe, at which point ideas such as Galen's belief in the four humours as a governing force of health became accepted as scientific fact.

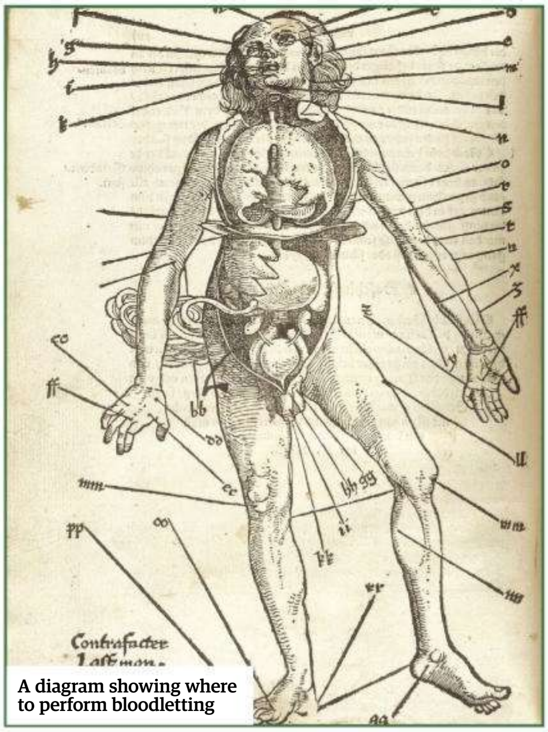
Blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile – the humours – were tied to the elements, the seasons and to your personality and physical characteristics. Fiery sanguinous folk, for example, were thought to be red-cheeked and rude of health, maybe a little mischievous but otherwise quite sweet. Melancholics, ruled by earth and black bile (atrabilis), were thin, sickly and introspective. Phlegmatics were foolish and Cholerics were ambitious. Most important was the balance of the four humours within a person – evacuation of any excess of a humour was the foundation of many courses of treatment, whether that meant providing laxatives or leeches. So using their knowledge of a patient's birth sign, the phase of the moon and the positions of the stars, combined with a thankfully more helpful physical examination to observe symptoms, and then the advice of the *Regimen*, physicians would diagnose patients and recommend various tinctures, elixirs and practices to alleviate their suffering, as well as perform more hands-on operations where necessary.

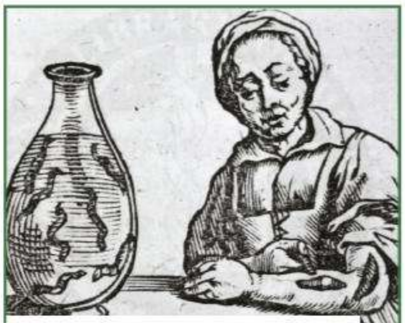
Plague doctors, for example, would lance the buboes of the infected, while physicians performed phlebotomies to drain excess blood and used trepans to tap holes into heads that were suffering migraines. For the most part, though, seeing a physician in Tudor England was a little like seeing your doctor today – they'd prescribe a course of medicine and send the patient for a visit to the local pharmacy.

In this case, the pharmacy was the apothecary. Serving the rich and poor alike, it was an emporium of home-made remedies and locally harvested medicinals, not to mention more exotic ingredients. The apothecaries were governed by the Grocer's Guild, so there were always also boxes of confectionaries and perfumes among the herbs and tonics, and they usually kept their own gardens to supplement their stock. It was in high demand, too – the Tudors took dill for digestion, dandelions for boils, liquorice for lung problems, wormwood for stomach pains, onions and garlic to create poultices for wounds; they treated headaches with sage, lavender, rose and bay; and they cured headlice with tobacco juice. There were scores of medicinal recipes and, whether a physician or a wise woman sent them, they would pick up their prescription at the apothecary.

If a patient found themselves in need of a tooth pulling, however, or perhaps a more serious operation, then they would instead continue on down to the street until they saw the barber's pole above their head, the spiralling red and white stripes signifying the bloodied bandages of the barber-surgeon. These were the qualified knife wielders who handled the business end of medical care, performing an amputation in the morning, wiping off their tools and then trimming a moustache in the afternoon. Often, they'd begin with a uroscopy, smelling and tasting a urine sample to determine its humouric composition and then comparing its colour to charts. A hugely common treatment in those days was bloodletting, going back to Galen's theory. From bad tempers to fevers, an excess of blood in the body was to blame for many problems, and both barber-surgeons and physicians had a wide array of instruments to help let some out. Using scarificators, they'd make scores ▶


A man being treated with bloodletting


A diagram showing where to perform bloodletting


Leeches were another common form of treatment, used to remove 'bad blood'

Diary of a barber-surgeon

An hour after sunrise

Just opening up and this poor fellow is hammering on the door, comes in with terrible toothache. Looked like the tooth worms were deep into their cups and the clove wasn't driving them out, so it had to be pulled. Nearly spilled the whisky when he saw the pliers.

Mid-morning

Urine diagnosis for a gentleman feeling out of sorts; too cold and foamy, an excess of phlegm causing a common cold. Recommended some of those excellent cinnamon, ginger and mustard biscuits from the lady down the way and a cooked apple to help fight off infection.

Noon

Went down to the marshes to buy leeches from the thatchers collecting reeds. Also purchased more whisky, bandages, fox grease, dried toad and marjoram from the apothecary. Butcher is still charging exorbitantly for his donkey and pig skins and I cannot seem to find a decent smith for my next set of scalpels.

Early afternoon

Amputation went well – cut and tied 50 or so veins and arteries in a little over nine minutes, I believe a personal best. Patient roared something awful, though, and the cauterisation was messy. Good thing I got those leeches – I pray he doesn't end up needing the maggots.

Twilight

The early-rising merchants are dropping in on their way home for haircuts. I must remember to empty out all of the bleeding bowls later. It was a little unprofessional having to empty one for use with one customer who had filled his bowl while another waited with half a beard trimmed.

Late evening

Closed the shop for the day, swept up the hair and sopped up the blood. Most of the hair can be salvaged for the premium perukes, but the more soiled batches will have to be used in lower value wigs for the market. I must remember to empty all of those bleeding bowls tomorrow.

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▶ of tiny incisions along the backs of patient's legs and collect the excess in a special bleeding bowl, sometimes marked with a scale in fluid ounces, or instead they'd use lancets, leeches or fleams to balance the humours.

Throughout the Tudor period, however, new ideas began to emerge that would change everyone's perception of health, the body and medicine forever. In 1546, for example, Girolamo Fracastoro published a book called *On Contagion* that argued sicknesses and infections were actually spread by 'disease seeds'.

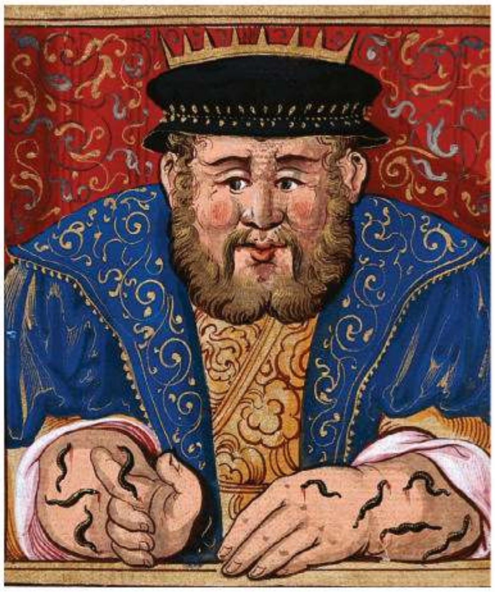
There was a man named Theophrastus von Hohenheim who styled himself as Paracelsus, in opposition to the Ancient Roman writer Celsus and his book *De Medicina*, which had been published in 1478 and quickly become a standard medical text despite being as old as Christ. Paracelsus – 'beyond Celsus' – was alchemically trained, and he challenged this outdated way of thinking, introducing the use of chemicals and metals to medicine, such as using mercury to treat syphilis. He's widely regarded as the founder of toxicology and rejected teachings that weren't based on observations.

In 1543, Andreas Vesalius donated a preserved skeleton to the University of Basel, where it is still on display today

Another man to reject the teachings of thousand-year-old orators was Andreas Vesalius, one of the greatest surgeons of his time (though a physician, rather than a barber). As well as forming the Company of Barbers and Surgeons of London, Henry VIII also legalised human dissection in 1540. This meant that doctors such as Vesalius could finally perform human autopsies, often in large theatres where students could observe, and gain a better understanding of how the body worked.

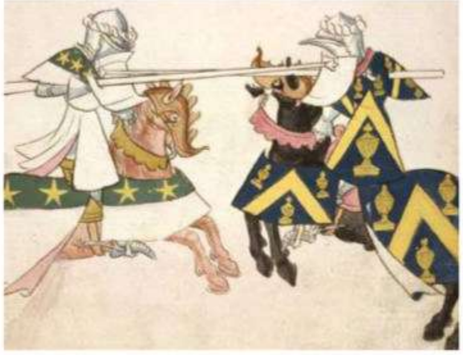
Following the instructions of Galen, which had been based on the bodies of pigs due to the similar illegality of human dissection in his time, doctors found that Galen was wrong. So Vesalius made his own observations and published a ground-breaking book called *De Humani Corpus Fabrica (On The Fabric Of The Human Body)* that contained beautifully illustrated, incredibly accurate diagrams of the human body – something people had never seen before, made possible by both the legalisation of dissection and the detail afforded by mass-printable woodcut illustrations. To recreate the experience of an autopsy, Vesalius also included flaps that could be lifted up to reveal layers of muscle and bone, veins and arteries, the positions of organs and the insides of the brain. The new insight that *The Fabric* gave to Tudor doctors was invaluable, helping to clear the air of Galen's obscuring theories on humours and miasmas.

Tudor England was an age of great discovery for medicine, the beginning of a revolutionary period of change that would see the arrival of sanitation, chemical drugs and microbiology. While for those receiving the sharp attention of a barber-surgeon or looking along the beak of a plague doctor it may have seemed a brutal time to be alive, it was a time of changing attitudes that would soon lead to the beginnings of modern medical practices, and the levels of both comfort and survivability that we enjoy today when in the care of a doctor.



This illustration was part of a manuscript telling the story of an overweight king who tried to extract his fat using leeches

> *"Physicians performed phlebotomies to drain excess blood and used trepans to tap holes intoheads that were suffering migraines"*



Defining moment

Henry VIII's jousting accident

24 January 1536

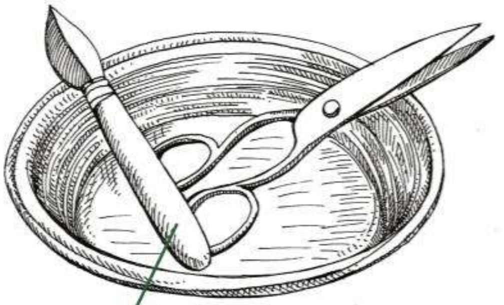
During a jousting tournament at Greenwich Palace, King Henry VIII is thrown off his horse, which lands on him, and falls unconscious for two hours. The accident nearly kills him and marks a turning point in his life, leading historians to wonder if he incurred a brain injury. It was also said to have shocked Anne Boleyn so greatly that it caused the miscarriage of their son. When Henry found out, he turned against Anne, believing she would never provide him with a male heir, and within half a year he had her executed and married his next wife, Jane Seymour.

Timeline

157 CE

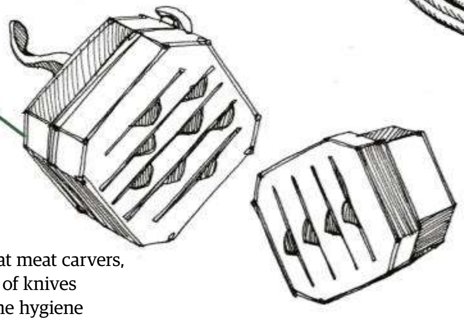
- **Galen's work begins**
  Ancient Greek physician Galen is making his name as a doctor, treating injured gladiators and writing his medical texts. His work will inform medical education throughout the Western Roman Empire.
  157 CE
- **Manuscripts lost**
  Romulus Augustus, last emperor of the Western Roman Empire, is deposed and the empire falls. Galen's work, which has not been translated into Latin, falls into obscurity for hundreds of years.
  476 CE
- **Textbook translation**
  Guy de Chauliac completes his *Chirurgia Magna (Great Surgery)*, drawing heavily on the recently rediscovered works of Galen, translated by Niccolò Deoprepio of Reggio. It becomes a standard medical textbook.
  1363
- **Royal charter**
  Edward IV grants a royal charter to the Barber's Guild, who become the Company of Barbers, granting them regulatory power over the practice of surgery in London.
  1462
- **Poetry in medicine**
  The *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum*, believed to have first been written in the 12th or 13th century, is published and quickly gains scholarly approval, and widespread recitations.
  1480
- **Midwifery manual**
  Der Rosengarten (*The Rose Garden*, published in England as *The Birth Of Mankind*), one of the most detailed books about childbirth so far, is written by Eucharius Rosslin, becoming a standard manual for midwives.
  1513

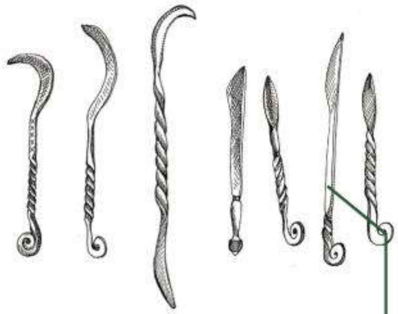
Tools of the trade



Scarificator

A precise, painful-looking piece of work, the scarificator was a multiplication of the lancet blade. Tiny slices of metal sit in rows and enable the blood-letter to speed up their work, quickly carving out exact measures of blood in regiments of light surface wounds across the patient's body.



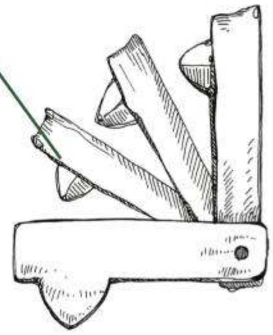


Knife

Ranging from tiny scalpels to great meat carvers, barber-surgeons had a wide array of knives at their disposal. Depending on the hygiene standards of the surgeon in question, you could live or die depending on the cleanliness of the blade – more often than not, they'd simply be rinsed in cold water between uses.

Fleam

Similar to the lancet, the fleam had a small triangular blade designed to puncture veins, but this instrument was made to be as fast, accurate and painless as possible. It came with a special fleam stick, and if you tapped the tool with the stick, then the attached blade would instantly pierce the skin.

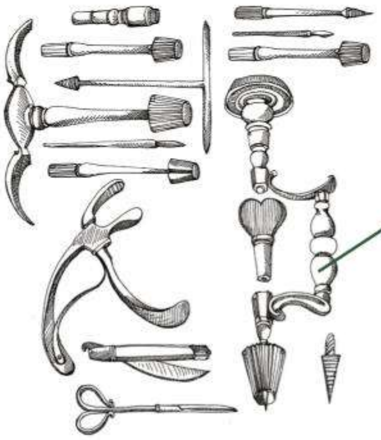


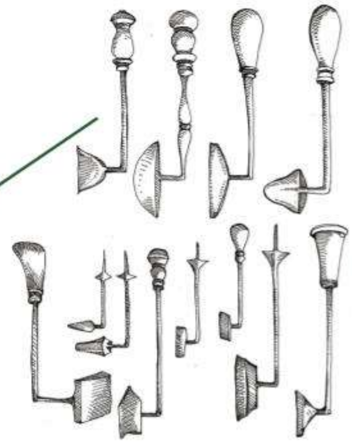
Lancet

A core tool of the phlebotomist, lancets were small triangular blades with a groove to channel spilled blood, which would be inserted into key points around the patient's body depending on their particular imbalance of humours and astrological readings, then drain away a healthy amount of blood.

Trepan

Used to bore holes into the skull, the trepan was essentially a bone-grinding corkscrew. At the time, most illnesses of the head were thought to be curable by exposing the insides of it to a little more fresh air, whether they be migraines, epileptic fits or symptoms of ADHD.





Cautery iron

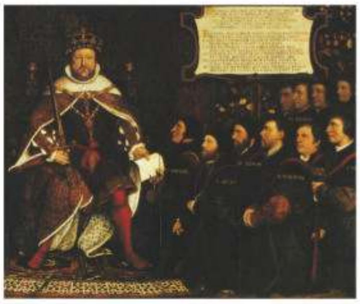
When amputations needed to be made, barber-surgeons used a great circular knife that could whip all the meat off a bone in one stroke, followed by a heavy saw in as few seconds as possible. They would then seal the wound by stretching pig skin across it and using a hot cautery iron to burn everything shut. No anaesthetics beyond alcohol, mind.

Defining moment

The Company of Barbers and Surgeons

1540

The roles of barbers and surgeons are further defined as the Barber's Guild and the Fellowship of Surgeons are merged into a single organisation. Barbers can no longer practice surgery and surgeons can no longer cut hair or shave. Both can continue their dental work.



Defining moment

Galen's era ends 1543

Andreas Vesalius publishes his series on the human body, which acts as a catalyst for the end of Galen's domination over medical thinking. Looking at the body layer by layer, in meticulously crafted pages, Vesalius mapped out the bones, muscles and ligaments, veins, arteries, nerves and organs. Observational science takes over as a new way of thinking and the beginnings of modern biology are born.

Medical school
Henry VIII founds the Royal College of Physicians in London. After 1523, the esteemed college would be responsible for managing the licenses of medical practitioners throughout England.
1518

The Great Surgery Book
Paracelsus publishes *Die Grosse Wundartzney* (*The Great Surgery Book*), firmly establishing his reputation in medicine and enabling him to better pursue his theories on toxic substances.
1536

A new theory
Girolamo Fracastoro proposes his theory of the spread of disease through spores with *On Contagion*, which remained influential until the advent of germ theory and began to replace a fear of noxious miasma.
1546

The king is dead
Henry VIII dies, spending his last days weak from the pain of his erupting ulcers and mad with fever. He passes the throne on to young Edward VI, just nine years of age.
1547

Back to black
The Black Death strikes again, killing more than 30,000 people in London. The next, and final, outbreak of the plague will be in 1665, at which point Yersinia pestis would finally fade into history.
1603

1745

Surgically removed
Surgeons decide to split from barbers once and for all by forming their own Company of Surgeons, which would go on to become the Royal College of Surgeons in 1800.
1745

© Alamy, Abi Daker

ENJOYING LIFE IN TUDOR ENGLAND

Explore the pastimes that kept Tudor people entertained, from trips to the theatre to bloody executions

WRITTEN BY EMILY STANIFORTH

How did the people of Tudor England spend their time? Well, for those in the upper echelons of society, the day-to-day goings on of the Tudor court would have provided much of their stimulation and entertainment. For those living in the lower classes, there was still fun to be had, and some of the most popular Tudor pastimes were pursuits that many people enjoy to this day. Sports of all kinds, creative forms of entertainment like music and drama, and some darker activities such as hunting and bear-baiting were all delighted in by royalty and ordinary people alike.

> *"Some popular Tudor pastimes were pursuits many people enjoy to this day"*

A night at the theatre

THE THEATRE WAS ONE PASTIME ENJOYED EQUALLY BY ALL SECTORS OF TUDOR SOCIETY

Theatre and the dramatic arts is arguably the pastime that is most associated with Tudor England. This is largely due to the infamous William Shakespeare and his legacy as England's most influential and revered playwright, which continues to this day.

The Globe Theatre, where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed for the first time, was opened in London in May 1599. It was at the Globe that plays such as *Hamlet*, *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar* made their debut to an audience of around 3,000 people. However, it is important to note that Shakespeare and the Globe were certainly not the first or only playwright and theatre in Tudor England. Elizabethan England saw a boom in the popularity and success of theatres, with many permanent playhouses being constructed from the 1570s onwards. In London, theatres such as the Rose, the Swan, the Curtain and the simply-named Theatre put on productions by different playwrights to captivated audiences throughout the Elizabethan golden age of drama.

These theatres were open to anyone: rich, poor, male, female. In fact, the theatre was particularly popular with the lower classes of society among whom the literacy level was low: for those who could not read or write, plays were an accessible form of entertainment. Royalty was also known to value the theatre, with Shakespeare's company of actors having performed at the royal court for Elizabeth I and later for the Stuart King James I.

While Shakespeare is the most remembered of Tudor playwrights today, there were other prominent playwrights operating during the period whose success matched that of the Bard's. Ben Jonson, known for his satirical comedies, began his career towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign, while Christopher Marlowe was considered the greatest Tudor playwright before Shakespeare's arrival on the scene. Other playwrights such as Thomas Middleton, John Webster and Thomas Dekker were contemporaries of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson who also enjoyed much success.

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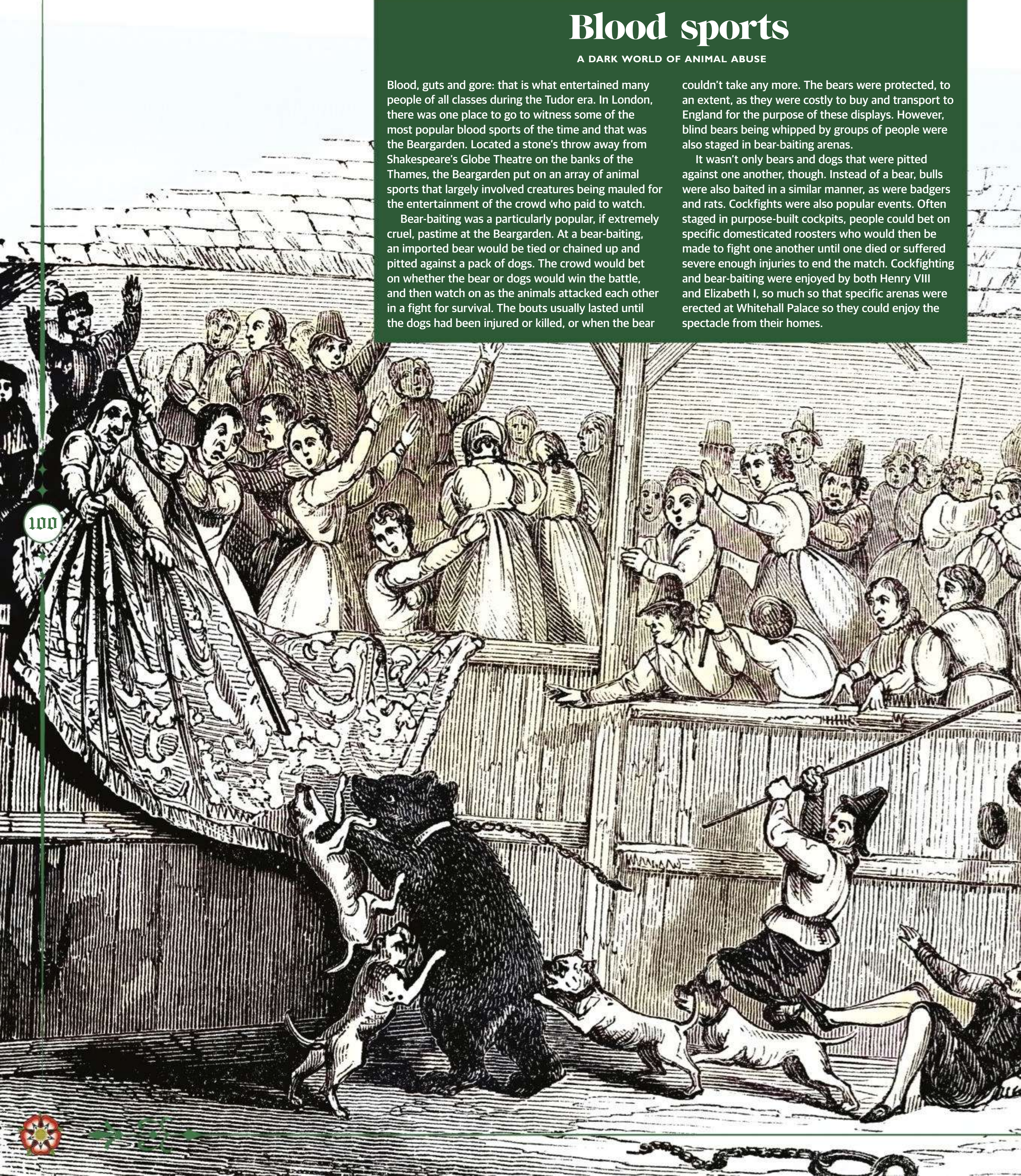
Blood sports

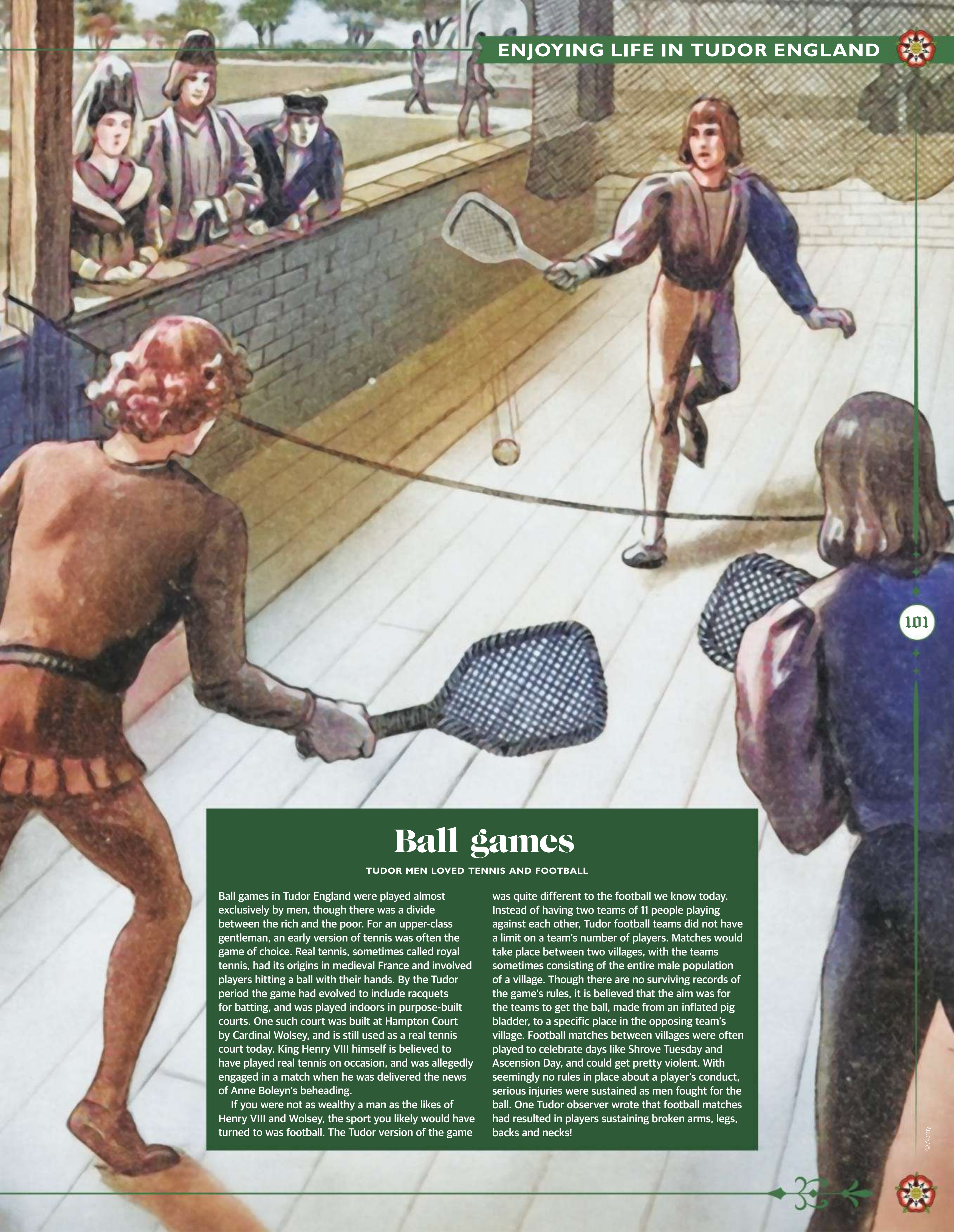
A DARK WORLD OF ANIMAL ABUSE

Blood, guts and gore: that is what entertained many people of all classes during the Tudor era. In London, there was one place to go to witness some of the most popular blood sports of the time and that was the Beargarden. Located a stone's throw away from Shakespeare's Globe Theatre on the banks of the Thames, the Beargarden put on an array of animal sports that largely involved creatures being mauled for the entertainment of the crowd who paid to watch.

Bear-baiting was a particularly popular, if extremely cruel, pastime at the Beargarden. At a bear-baiting, an imported bear would be tied or chained up and pitted against a pack of dogs. The crowd would bet on whether the bear or dogs would win the battle, and then watch on as the animals attacked each other in a fight for survival. The bouts usually lasted until the dogs had been injured or killed, or when the bear couldn't take any more. The bears were protected, to an extent, as they were costly to buy and transport to England for the purpose of these displays. However, blind bears being whipped by groups of people were also staged in bear-baiting arenas.

It wasn't only bears and dogs that were pitted against one another, though. Instead of a bear, bulls were also baited in a similar manner, as were badgers and rats. Cockfights were also popular events. Often staged in purpose-built cockpits, people could bet on specific domesticated roosters who would then be made to fight one another until one died or suffered severe enough injuries to end the match. Cockfighting and bear-baiting were enjoyed by both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, so much so that specific arenas were erected at Whitehall Palace so they could enjoy the spectacle from their homes.





Ball games

TUDOR MEN LOVED TENNIS AND FOOTBALL

Ball games in Tudor England were played almost exclusively by men, though there was a divide between the rich and the poor. For an upper-class gentleman, an early version of tennis was often the game of choice. Real tennis, sometimes called royal tennis, had its origins in medieval France and involved players hitting a ball with their hands. By the Tudor period the game had evolved to include racquets for batting, and was played indoors in purpose-built courts. One such court was built at Hampton Court by Cardinal Wolsey, and is still used as a real tennis court today. King Henry VIII himself is believed to have played real tennis on occasion, and was allegedly engaged in a match when he was delivered the news of Anne Boleyn's beheading.

If you were not as wealthy a man as the likes of Henry VIII and Wolsey, the sport you likely would have turned to was football. The Tudor version of the game was quite different to the football we know today. Instead of having two teams of 11 people playing against each other, Tudor football teams did not have a limit on a team's number of players. Matches would take place between two villages, with the teams sometimes consisting of the entire male population of a village. Though there are no surviving records of the game's rules, it is believed that the aim was for the teams to get the ball, made from an inflated pig bladder, to a specific place in the opposing team's village. Football matches between villages were often played to celebrate days like Shrove Tuesday and Ascension Day, and could get pretty violent. With seemingly no rules in place about a player's conduct, serious injuries were sustained as men fought for the ball. One Tudor observer wrote that football matches had resulted in players sustaining broken arms, legs, backs and necks!

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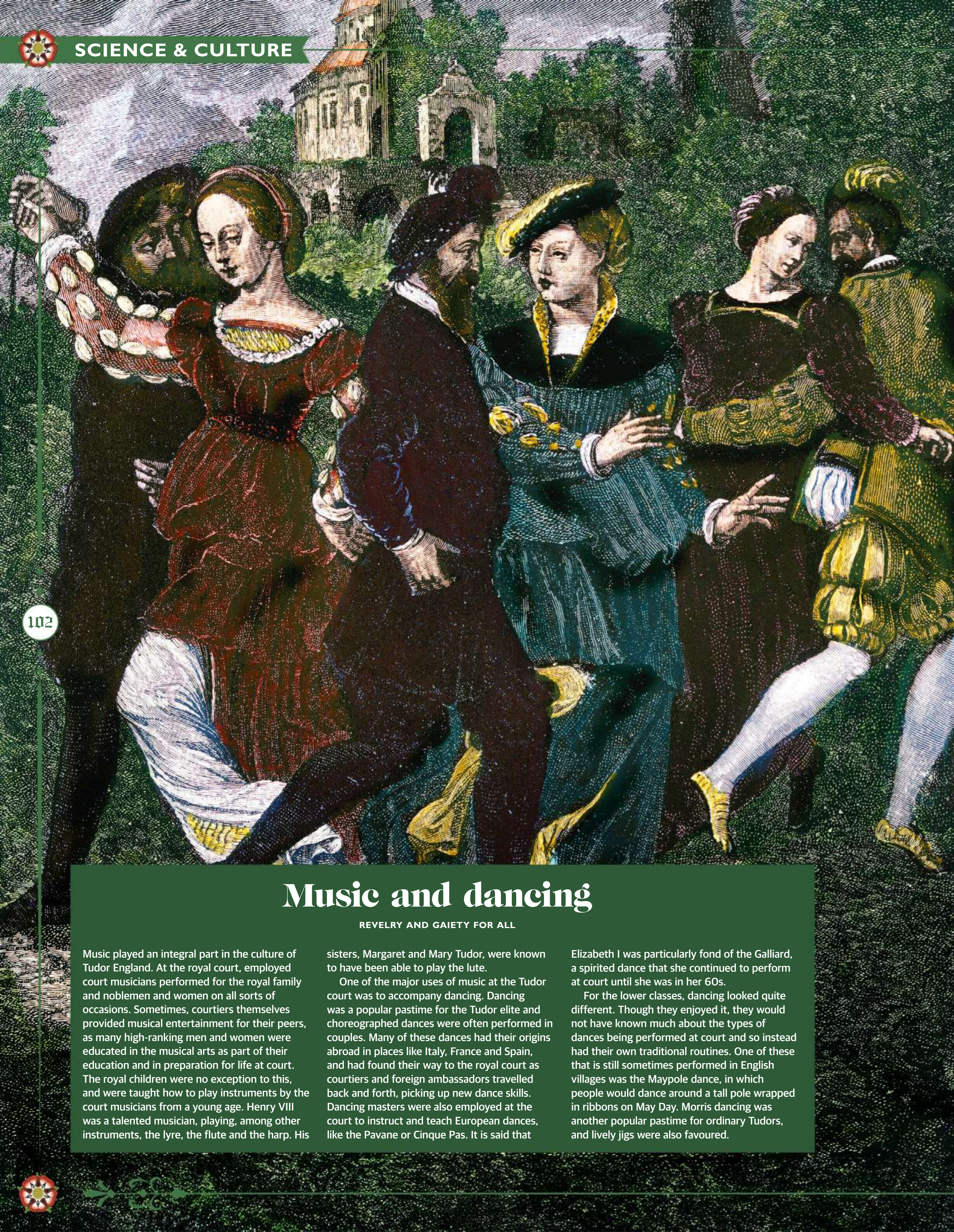

Music and dancing

REVELRY AND GAIETY FOR ALL

Music played an integral part in the culture of Tudor England. At the royal court, employed court musicians performed for the royal family and noblemen and women on all sorts of occasions. Sometimes, courtiers themselves provided musical entertainment for their peers, as many high-ranking men and women were educated in the musical arts as part of their education and in preparation for life at court. The royal children were no exception to this, and were taught how to play instruments by the court musicians from a young age. Henry VIII was a talented musician, playing, among other instruments, the lyre, the flute and the harp. His sisters, Margaret and Mary Tudor, were known to have been able to play the lute.

One of the major uses of music at the Tudor court was to accompany dancing. Dancing was a popular pastime for the Tudor elite and choreographed dances were often performed in couples. Many of these dances had their origins abroad in places like Italy, France and Spain, and had found their way to the royal court as courtiers and foreign ambassadors travelled back and forth, picking up new dance skills. Dancing masters were also employed at the court to instruct and teach European dances, like the Pavane or Cinque Pas. It is said that Elizabeth I was particularly fond of the Galliard, a spirited dance that she continued to perform at court until she was in her 60s.

For the lower classes, dancing looked quite different. Though they enjoyed it, they would not have known much about the types of dances being performed at court and so instead had their own traditional routines. One of these that is still sometimes performed in English villages was the Maypole dance, in which people would dance around a tall pole wrapped in ribbons on May Day. Morris dancing was another popular pastime for ordinary Tudors, and lively jigs were also favoured.

Board and card games

INSPIRING COMPETITION, BETTING AND GAMBLING

Like many of us still do today, the Tudors loved a good board or card game. Chess and backgammon remain popular games in the modern world, and were also popular in Tudor England, though they were only played by people on the wealthier end of the societal spectrum. However, there were many other games that were enjoyed by people on all levels of society. In fact, the term 'board game' originates from this period, as games were played on boards that were balanced on a frame. Grids and outlines for games were carved into these boards, which could then be easily put away when dismantled. Draughts and dominoes were a Tudor favourite, as were games that have not stood the test of time quite as well, such as Nine Men's Morris and Shovelboard.

Card games like Trump, Noddy, Piquet and Primero (a forerunner to poker) were fashionable in Tudor England, and could be played by anyone with access to a pack of cards. As with today, the competition of card and board games brought with it the excitement of gambling. Gambling was rife in Tudor times and Henry VII's government even attempted to put a ban on servants betting. Ironically, Henry VII himself was known to be a huge gambler, as was (unsurprisingly) his son, Henry VIII.

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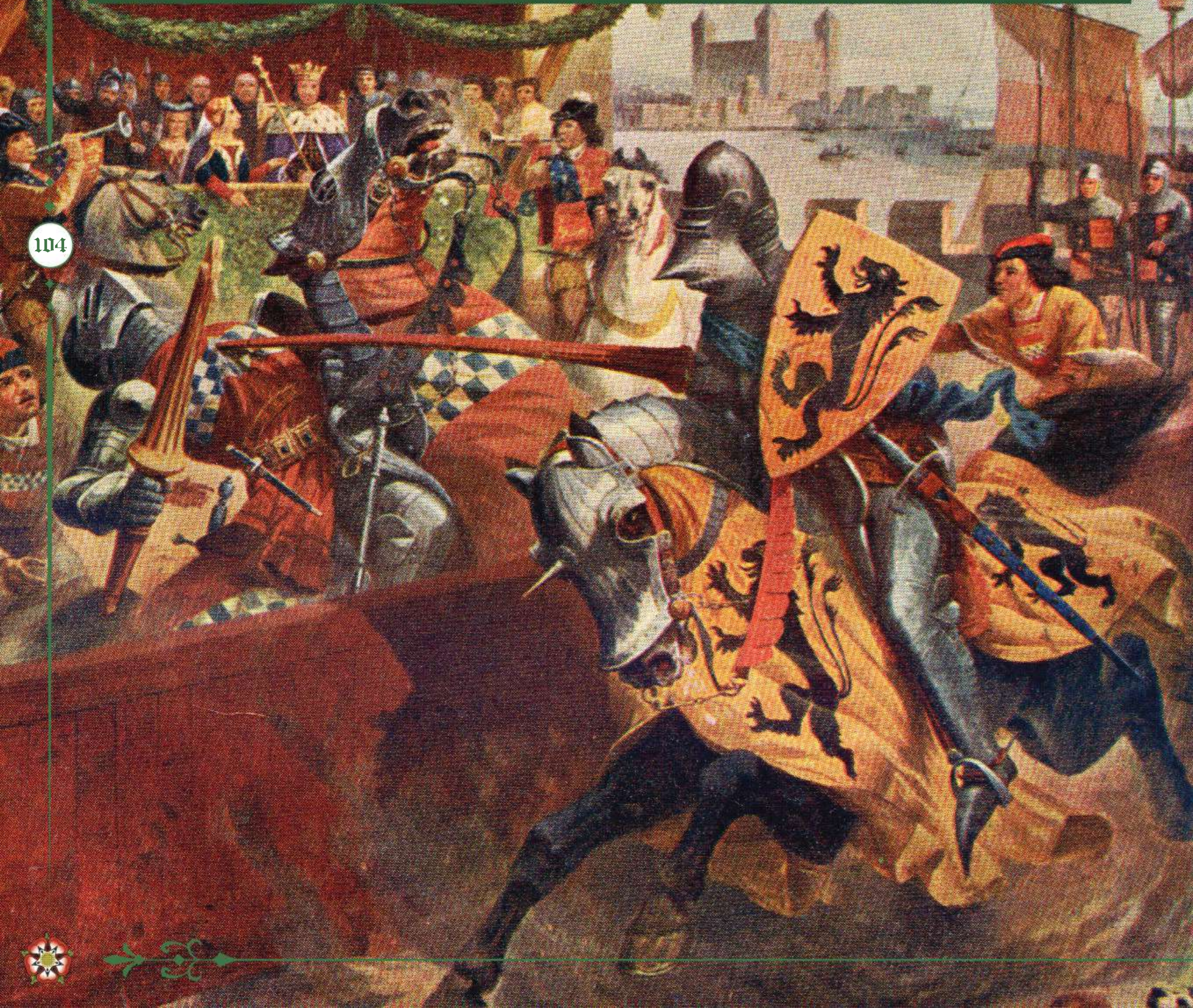
Jousting and archery

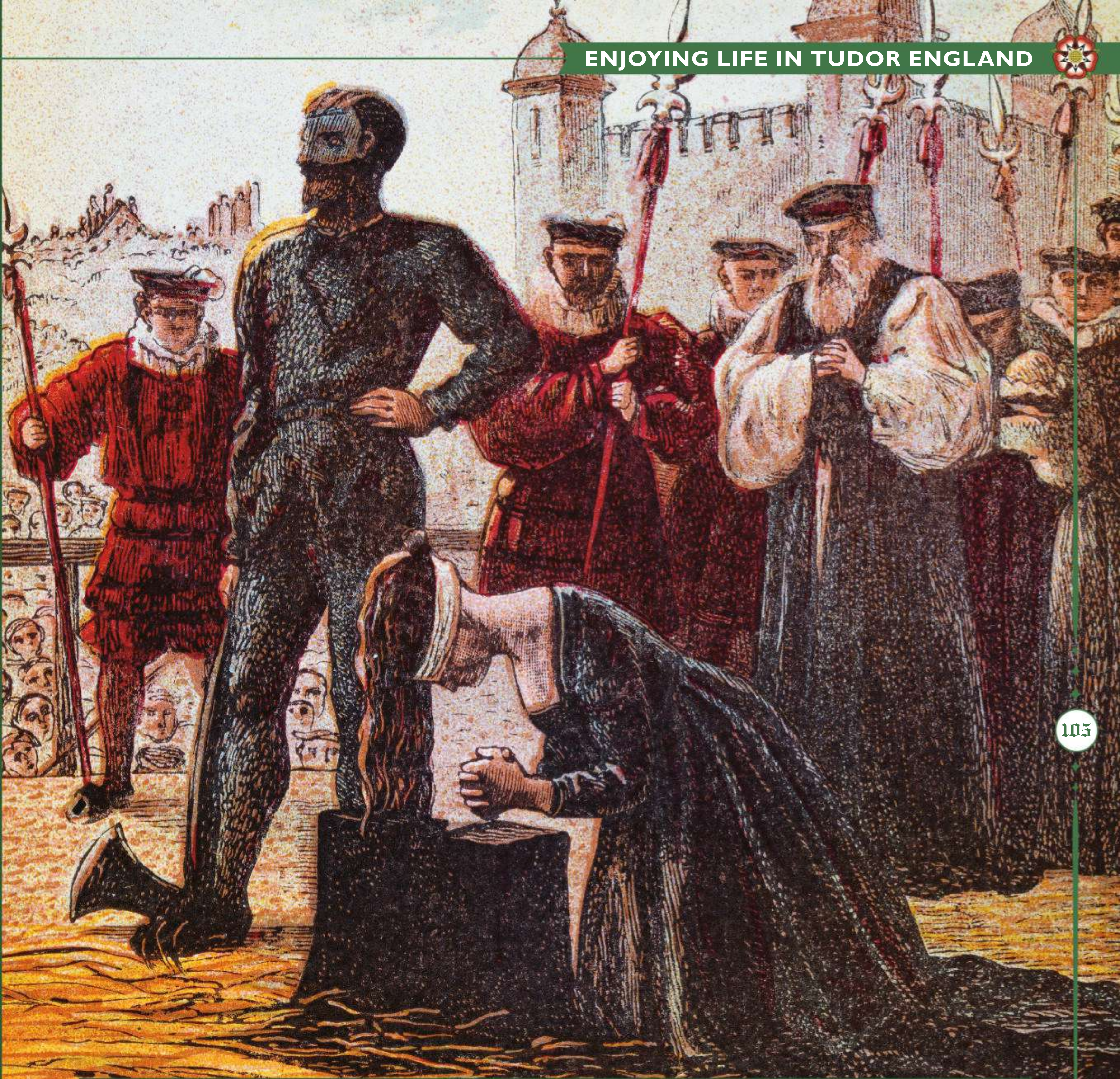
DISPLAYING MILITARY PROWESS THROUGH SPORT

When you think of the pastimes enjoyed by Tudor royalty, jousting is probably the one that immediately comes to mind. Starting as a medieval military exercise, jousting had become an enjoyable pastime for noblemen by the late 15th century, in which they could display their military prowess, horsemanship, strength and sporting ability. In a joust, two armoured men on horseback would face off against each other from two ends of a field. They would gallop towards each other, pointing a lance that measured up to three metres (ten feet) long in front of them, aiming to knock their opponent off their horse – or at least hitting their shield or head. Henry VIII was particularly fond of jousting in his younger years, until he suffered a devastating blow in 1536, which saw him crushed by his own horse and knocked unconscious for a number of hours. It has been suggested that head injuries sustained in this accident may have contributed to Henry's increased tyrannical behaviour in his later life, though this remains unproven.

Of course, women could not participate in jousting, but would eagerly watch tournaments from the sidelines supporting their own champions. Giving tokens to their favoured competing knights was popular, and tournaments were sometimes held in honour of a particular lady. Of all Tudor sports, jousting was the most romantic and upheld medieval concepts of chivalry.

Archery was a common pastime for the men of Tudor England for both the rich and the poor. Although a sport that could be enjoyed, it was actually much more important than that in Tudor society, as honing your archery prowess was seen as a necessary life skill. Bows and arrows were traditional hunting apparatus during this period, and meant men could provide for themselves if needed. Hunting for food was a vital activity for many, and also served as a popular hobby, with the rich hunting deer and boar while the poor hunted game birds and hares. Furthermore, archery was a vital skill for a Tudor man because there was always the possibility they may be required to fight in a war. Every Sunday after church, the men of Tudor England were required to practise archery in order to ensure they were prepared for battle when called upon.





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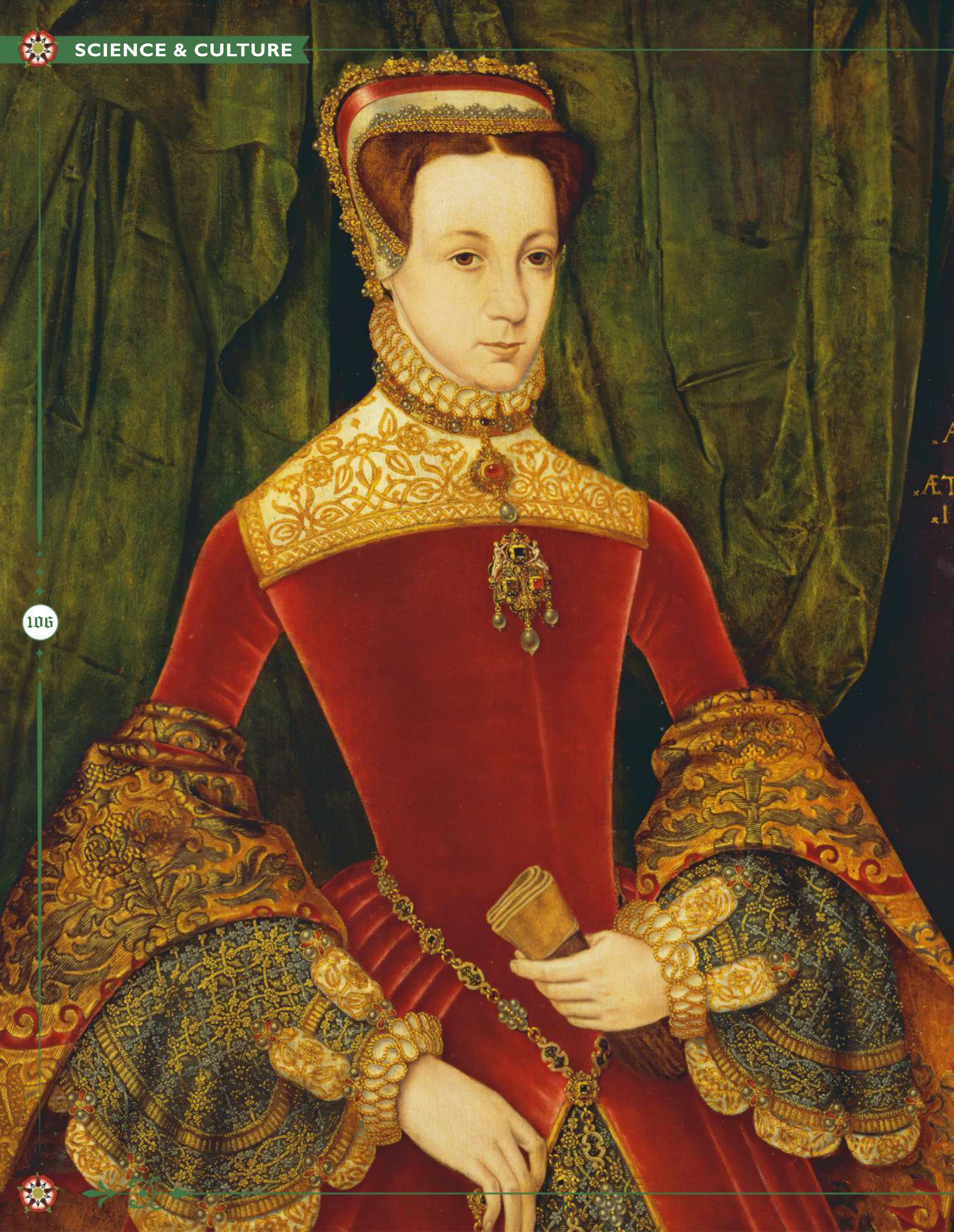
Executions

FINDING FUN IN DEATH

The history of the Tudor era has become synonymous with execution. From the beginning of the Tudor's dynastic reign, Henry VII had those who opposed him killed, most notably Perkin Warbeck in 1499, who was hanged at Tyburn after he challenged the King's throne. Henry VIII was notorious for sending those who displeased him to the chopping block, particularly his wives and closest advisors. Mary I's nickname of Bloody Mary speaks to her penchant for burning Protestants at the stake, and her sister Elizabeth was not much better, taking after the other members of her bloodthirsty family. While not necessarily a pastime for the Tudor monarchs, they were clearly not averse to inflicting suffering and death on those who disagreed with them. But for the people of Tudor England, executions absolutely were a spectacle for those looking for a way to pass the time.

Executions were often a very public affair, taking place in spaces that allowed crowds to gather and witness the final moments of the condemned. The reasoning behind a public execution was that it was intended to serve as a literal display of the monarch's power over their subjects. However, those in the crowds often saw the occasion as a day out where they could immerse themselves in the drama of the moment. In many ways, the desire for gory entertainment dates back centuries and public executions can be seen as an evolution of gladiatorial combat in Ancient Rome. The Tudors were not the only people to enjoy the spectacle of an execution, though, with the tradition of public executions continuing in England until the 19th century.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WHAT DID THE TUDORS WEAR?

In the Tudor era, clothes were a serious business for some, and a simple necessity for others...

WRITTEN BY CATHERINE CURZON

Fashion has always been a social signifier and just like today, in Tudor times it was a way of flaunting taste, wealth and status. Though few garments have survived, we have a good idea of what the Tudor upper class wore from the portraits they commissioned, which act as a window into their world. They are the closest thing we have to Tudor fashion plates.

For ladies, it was all about layers. Regardless of social class or status, all women started with a base layer of a linen shift. Drawers or knickers were not a part of the female wardrobe for several generations, and the linen shift was something that could be regularly laundered, saving the effort of having to fully clean the more expensive and difficult to care for textiles that went on top. Instead, the shift sat against the skin and could be laundered and changed daily, if the lifestyle of the wearer allowed it. Many shifts were beautifully decorated with blackwork embroidery, making works of art of this most simple garment.

Stays and corsetry were not around for most of the Tudor period, instead ladies wore a kirtle, often stiffened and straightened with a central busk of wood or bone, to give shape and posture. When stays, known as a pair of bodies, came along in the reign of Elizabeth I, she embraced them - and the extreme shape they could create - with enthusiasm.

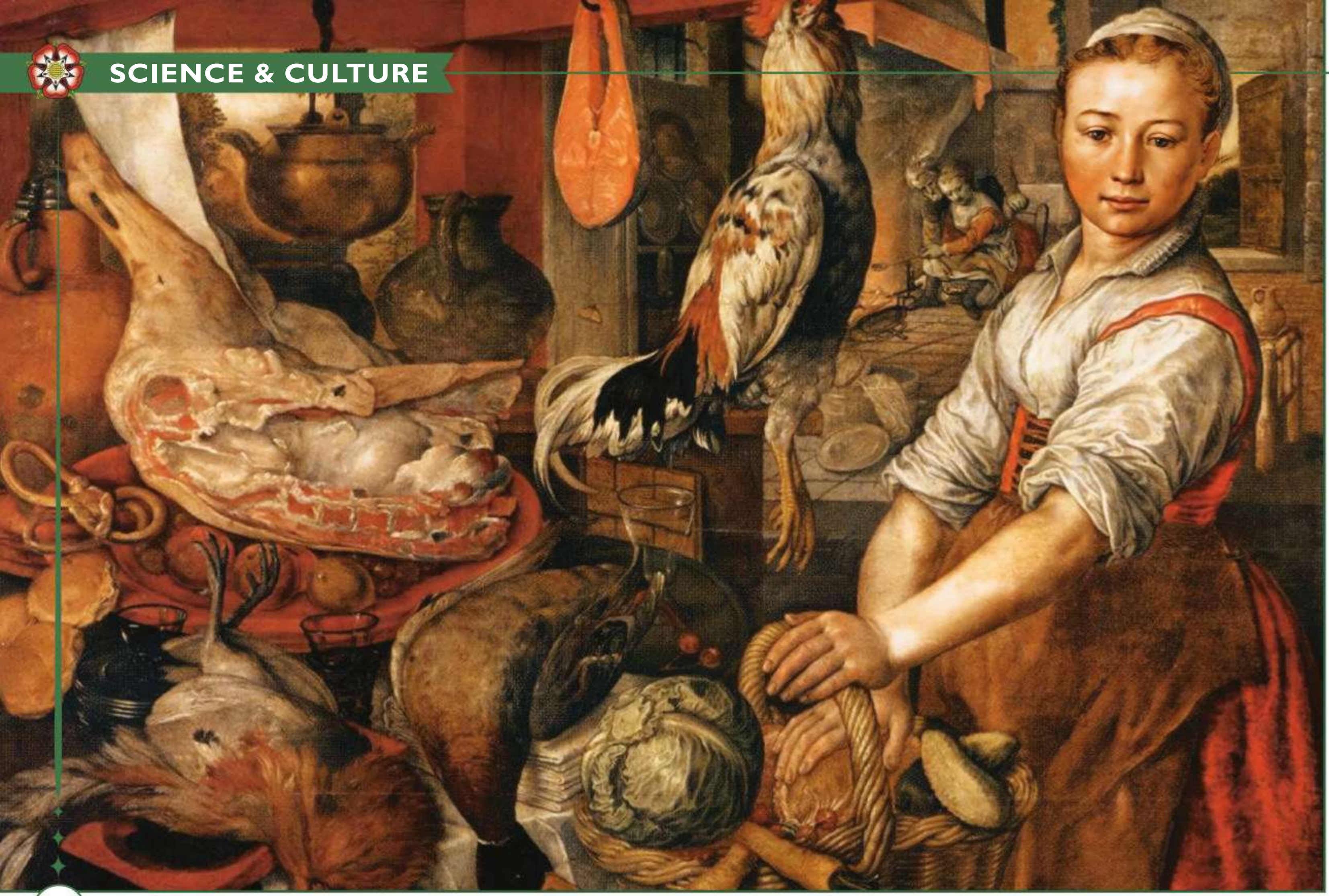
Underneath the Tudor skirt was a vast amount of superstructure, which made the linen shift and petticoats look very simple indeed. To achieve the fashionable full-skirted silhouette, a woman started with a 'bum roll' - padding that was tied around the waist. Atop that they wore a farthingale, a Spanish fashion that came to England with Catherine of Aragon. The farthingale was a cone-like undergarment that gave the skirt an expansive shape that flared out from the waist. This got wider and wider with the advent of the drum or French farthingale, a cartwheel-like garment that flared out at the hips, enabling the skirt to fall in a dramatic, enormous tumble of fabric. In portraits of Queen Elizabeth I, she is typically depicted in a hyper-fashionable silhouette, her torso widest at the shoulder then narrowed by stays down to a small waist, that flared out again with the French farthingale.

With the structure in place, a woman would then put on her bodice and skirts, which she would be laced and pinned into. In the earlier Tudor era, these laces would be hidden beneath a stomacher, an elaborately decorated panel that covered the torso and concealed the fastenings and kirtle beneath. When it came to the outer garments, the more elaborate and embellished the better. The bodice would show a glimpse of the linen shift at the cuffs and neckline and once again, Catherine of Aragon proved a trendsetter by having her shifts embroidered wherever they were visible. This style was swiftly copied by courtiers and nobility before filtering down to those members of the middle classes who could afford such luxuries. The skirt of the Tudor woman, meanwhile, would be as big and full as she could afford. The more money sloshing around, the more exquisite the fabrics used and the more extravagant the trimmings - everything from simple but showy ribbons to precious jewels would be employed to make a statement.

With skirts flaring to extremes thanks to the farthingale, conspicuous consumption was all-important. The French farthingale was capable of supporting an elaborately pleated skirt made out of as much as three metres (just over three yards) of fabric and was a perfect declaration of the amount of expensive textiles a woman could afford to wear in one single gown.

It wasn't only dresses that made a statement, either. Tudor women wore a simple linen cap over their hair, but on top of that they added a hood and once again, they looked to the court for inspiration. Fashionista Catherine of Aragon

© Getty Images



ABOVE This working woman's dress is a far cry from the elaborate and impractical clothing of the upper classes, who could afford to sacrifice ease of movement and practicality for fashion

OPPOSITE TOP Seen here in her French farthingale, Elizabeth I owned more than 250 gowns, 120 cloaks, and 125 petticoats, along with hundreds of other pieces

OPPOSITE BOTTOM A uniquely masculine garment, a codpiece became a must-have accessory for Tudors, the bigger and fancier the better

popularised the English hood, or gable, which framed the face with a triangular shape. Her successor, the ill-fated Anne Boleyn, made her mark on fashion with the softer drapes of the French hood and the women of court, as well as the ruling classes, swiftly followed. However, when Anne fell from favour and Henry brought in Jane Seymour as his third wife, she brought back Catherine's English hood, clearly signifying that she and Anne Boleyn had very different styles and personalities. It also suggested a complete break with the controversial Boleyn family and signposted that this was a new start for the royal court.

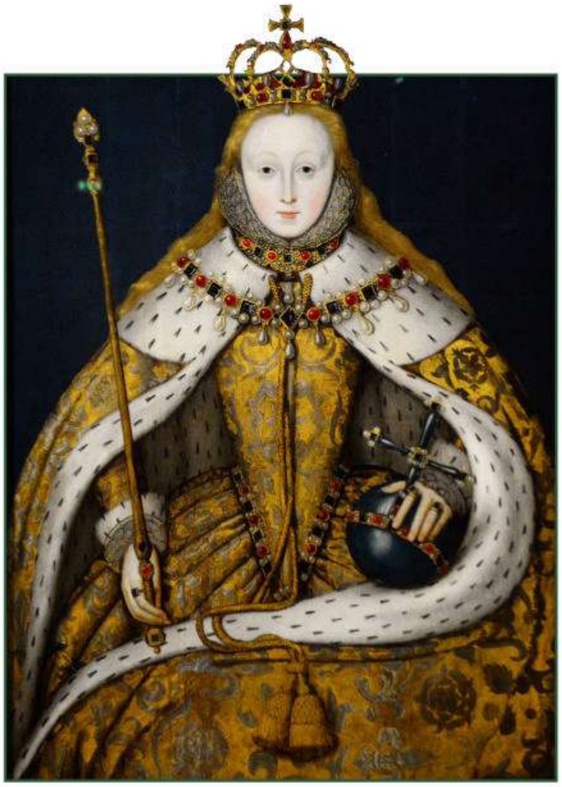
Everything in the Tudor era carried a message. Pearls, a highly fashionable and valuable accoutrement, were a sign of purity, while the capacity of a gentleman's codpiece could send a clear suggestion about his virility. Even gloves, fashionable accessories for upper-class outings, could carry a coded message. The rich and fashionable wore elaborately trimmed and decorated gloves with artificially long and graceful fingers, which were a clear sign that the wearer had no manual tasks to perform. Finally, shoes for ladies were delicate and ladylike, hidden beneath their skirts unless, like Elizabeth I, ladies wished to show off their dainty feet. Chopines, resembling platform shoes, were strapped to the soles when women might have to walk through mud, elevating their ornate silk slippers above the muck.

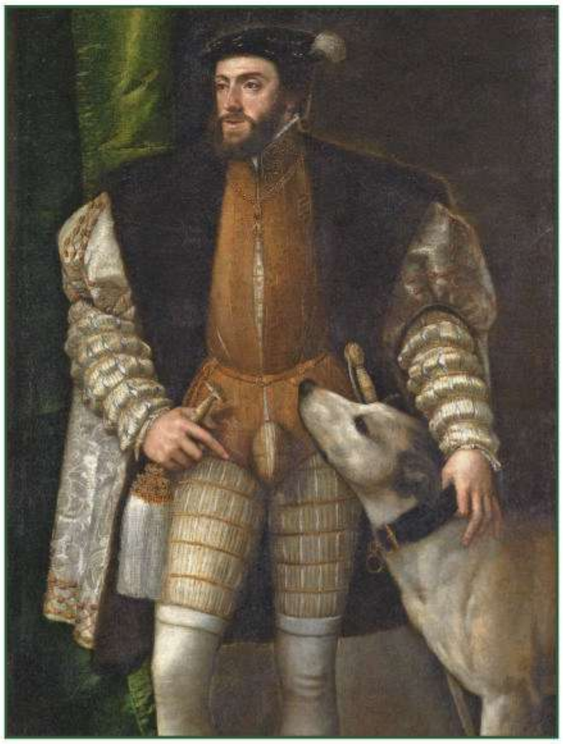
For men, meanwhile, the rules weren't that different. Once again it was all about the textiles used and the sheer yardage that could be employed. Though they couldn't wear farthingales, men demonstrated their own conspicuous consumption in the elaborate frills that fell from the necks and cuffs of their white silk shirts. Over these, they wore the close-fitting jacket and trousers, the doublet and the hose. Knee breeches came along in the 1570s, replacing the flared hose and beginning the trend for narrow leg coverings that would continue through the ages. Starched and pleated ruffs were popular for men and women in the Elizabethan age, employing huge amounts of lace and starch. Some of these garments were so elaborate that they had their own dedicated attendants, whose job it was to care for the ruffs of their employers.

A uniquely masculine trend was the codpiece. Stuffed with wool, this decorative pouch both concealed and perfectly spotlighted the groin. It's little surprise that Henry VIII liked to wear an outsized codpiece that was elaborately decorated, drawing maximum attention to his nether regions. He accessorised this with enormously padded shoulders, subtly suggesting his masculinity and power to all who saw him or his portrait.

While rich women wore farthingales and reams of fabric, those of lower classes weren't anywhere near as elaborate. Living lives that didn't lend themselves to bejewelled gloves of white kid leather and silken stomachers studded with pearls, they instead wore a linen cap and petticoat, which could be laundered as regularly as time and finances allowed. Over this was

> *"Men demonstrated their own conspicuous consumption in the elaborate frills that fell from the necks and cuffs of their shirts"*

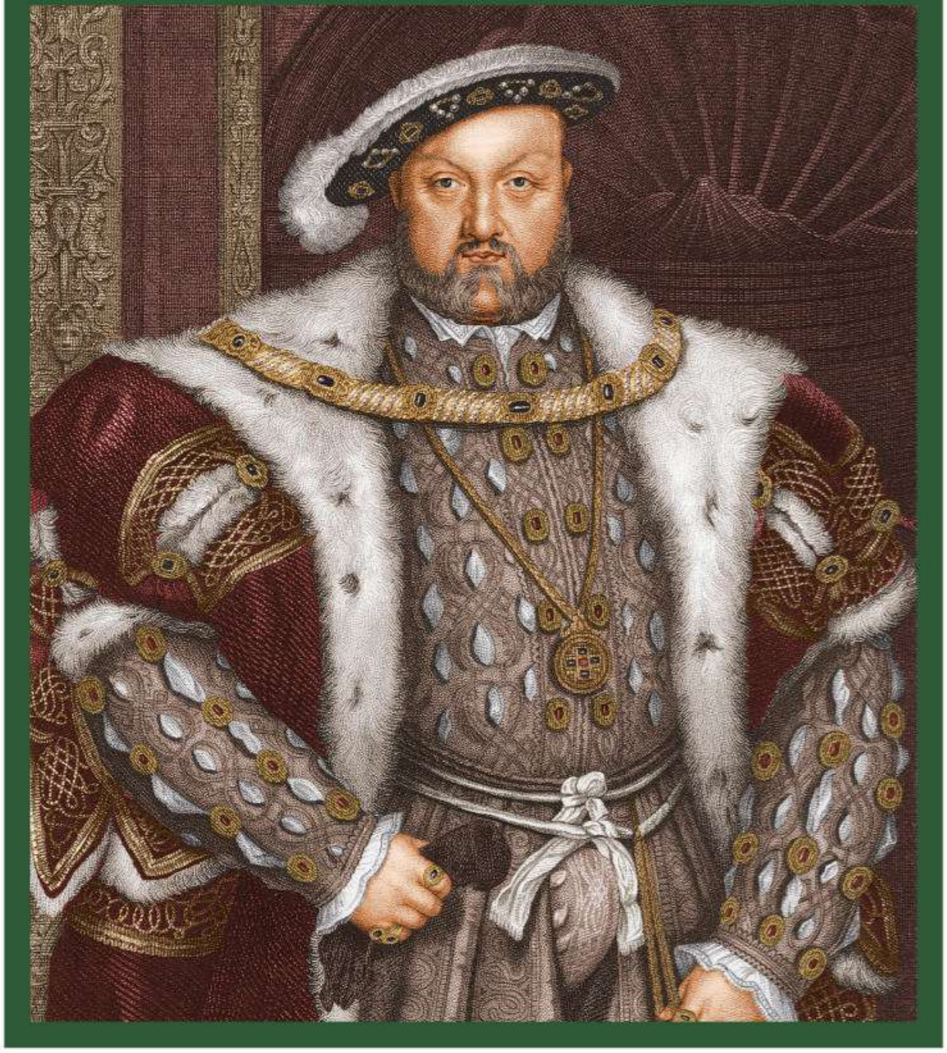




Sumptuary laws

Henry VIII passed several Acts of Apparel during his reign, which regulated the clothing of the classes, keeping the social status quo tightly controlled. Nobody would be able to dress better than their so-called superior and at a glance, you would be able to tell where someone sat in the social strata. A 1509 act rules that only the king and his close family could wear purple or gold silk, for instance, while also ensuring that an earl can wear sable, but those beneath him must wear a less valuable fur. The laws were highly detailed and everyone was expected to obey them.

Should someone have the audacity to attempt to flout a sumptuary law, the punishment was considerable and would usually involve confiscation of the garment and a fine. However, it was a risk that some people were willing to take, for the sake of sending their own message to their peers that they were doing very well indeed. As the years wore on, people became more and more bold as they challenged the laws, risking the punishment for the sake of their wardrobes. It was a battle that even the King couldn't win.



nothing more than a simple woollen kirtle of a laced bodice and a simple skirt. Their shoes were very similar to those of their menfolk - and indeed, the upper classes - only made in far less expensive materials. A simple slipper shape, complete with hard-wearing soles, they were not the dainty silk and velvet slippers of the royal court. By the time of Elizabeth I, heels had grown, and brand-new silk stockings were the latest must-have fashion of the court. This obviously wasn't the case for the working classes. However, while it is natural to imagine drab, uninspiring colours among that group, access to natural dye at least meant that fabric could be coloured whenever necessary.

Tudor clothing was usually made from natural materials, such as wool and linen, while the rich would add velvet, silk and satin to show off what they could afford. For the men and women in the street, however, it was a very different story. Clothing was expensive and there was no such thing as fast fashion, so for the lower classes, they had to choose garments that would last. Their clothes were more simple and rugged than those of their rich contemporaries and, rather than being regularly replaced, would be patched and repaired, altered and handed down from generation to generation. Even if someone from the lower classes harboured ambition to reach sartorial heights, they would have found themselves restricted by the sumptuary laws that imposed legal limits on what could be worn by members of each social class.

In Tudor high society, the most influential fashionistas came from the royal court. What the kings and queens wore set the standard for style, as well as serving as a clear signal that someone had plenty of cash to splash on the latest looks. For affluent Tudors, the order of the day was that more is always more.

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THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND

Sparking in the workshops of Florence, Europe's cultural rebirth spread throughout the continent and found its own unique flare in England

In January, 1504, perhaps the greatest work of art mankind had yet produced was about to be unveiled for the first time. The Vestry Board of Florence's Cathedral gathered in eager anticipation to see what the artist, Michelangelo Simoni, had been working on feverishly and in total secret for over two years. Standing at 14 feet, carved flawlessly out of pure white marble, 'David' was revealed towering over them – it was unlike anything they or anyone had ever seen before. What they beheld was an anatomically perfect, if giant, reinterpretation of the biblical character, in tense preparation to fight Goliath – a metaphor of Florence's defiance and strength. Today we see one of the many treasures of the Renaissance, Europe's cultural rebirth.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Florence was the unquestionable heart of the Renaissance. A city constantly steeped in fear, of invasion from foreign powers, as well as disastrous plagues, it was here that some of the foremost thinkers, artists and writers of the era would find patronage and inspiration for their work. Though throughout the Reformation the Italian cities remained deeply Catholic, this fear and constant reminder of life's frailty gave much of the art and literature in this era notable humanist traits.

In a break from medieval traditions, artists began to depict scenes with unprecedented realism, utilising light and dark to cast their figures in new and more-dramatic tones. For the first time the Virgin Mary, or the Madonna with child, actually appeared lifelike, bringing out her humanity to the observer. Biblical figures, in addition to characters from antiquity, were being brought to life in a way never seen before, in terms of their form as much as the new and more vivid colours artists could bring to their brush.

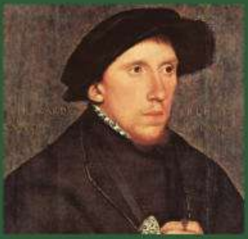
With a population of around 60,000 at the outset of the 15th century, Florence was a small, but by no means feeble city state. Twelve artist guilds chiefly led the city, monitoring and regulating the flourishing cloth and textile trade that brought in vast amounts of wealth. The city was also sporadically headed by one of several ruling families. The most famous of these was Lorenzo de' Medici, who became the patron of some of Florence's most brilliant minds and artists, including Sandro Botticelli, the aforementioned Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. This method of working under patronage would come to typify lives of many Renaissance artisans, who quickly found fame and fortune plying their skills for rich patrons and even royalty all over Europe.

> "The ideas of the Renaissance were much slower to spread to England"

The ideas and ideals of the Renaissance were much slower to spread to England than elsewhere. While Botticelli was completing one of his most famous masterpieces in 1483 – 'Venus and Mars' – England was only just emerging from the latest clash of its bloody civil war. Botticelli's painting depicts a sleeping Mars, the classical god of war, and an alert Venus, the goddess of love. In England, at least, love and peace was restored after the coronation of Henry VII and his marriage to Elizabeth of York, uniting the two warring families and establishing the ruling Tudor dynasty.

In this new peace, patronage of the arts and the emerging mercantile class could thrive, rather than suffer under heavy investment in war. Though a printing press had been brought to England in around 1575, most of the population remained illiterate in the pre-Reformation state. However it would be Henry VIII's reign, beginning in 1509, that would truly see the Renaissance arrive in England. Henry was a huge admirer of art, architecture and a keen musician. Befitting a man of his status, he was well educated and was even an amateur alchemist, with his own personal collection of medicinal ingredients. In particular Henry's love of music, song and poetry spread throughout his court, and it was during his reign that the composer Thomas Tallis made his name. Leading the Royal Choir, Tallis was a gifted singer and organist, appearing at Sunday Mass on a rotary basis. Though much of his earlier life is undocumented, he found great success under Henry's patronage and continued to serve in the Chapel Royal into Edward VI's, Mary I's and even Elizabeth I's reigns. During this time he worked

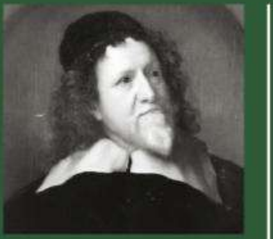
Key figures



Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey

A friend of King Henry VIII, Howard is considered to be among the foremost instigators of English Renaissance court poetry and the English sonnet form. Sharing his verse among a select coterie of friends at court, his work reflects on life, death and the ideals of living 'the happy life'. Howard rose in the royal graces after his first cousin, Anne Boleyn, married the king in 1533. Though he eventually fell from the king's favour and was executed in 1547 just days before the king's own death, for many Howard embodies the Renaissance spirit of the warrior, the scholar and the poet.

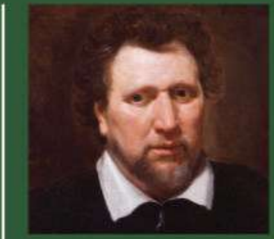
ABOVE: This portrait of Howard was produced by Hans Holbein The Younger, the king's royal painter



Inigo Jones

A highly skilled engineer and artist, Jones spent many of his formative years in Italy, where he absorbed much of the artistic styles brimming in Florence and elsewhere at the end of the 16th century. He gained fame and fortune first as a set and costume designer for King James I, where he worked on the court's extravagant court masques. Soon he was introducing the grandeur of Italian Renaissance architecture to England, working on renovations to St Paul's Cathedral, a new Banqueting House at Whitehall, and even the lavish Covent Garden estate in London, where he designed the capital's first square in the style of Italian piazzas.

ABOVE: Jones was chiefly responsible for bringing Renaissance styles to London into the 17th century



Ben Jonson

Jonson attended a Westminster elementary school at an early age, where he embarked on rhetorical and classical training, as well as lessons in Greek and Latin. A lack of funds forced him to return to his stepfather's trade as a bricklayer, but Jonson was driven to better himself and soon entered the world of the emerging Elizabethan theatres in Bankside. A friend and colleague of Shakespeare, Jonson became among the foremost literary critics and playwrights of his era. After gaining a royal pension shortly after the publication of his first folio he is even considered to be England's first ever poet laureate.

ABOVE: Jonson became not just a great poet and playwright, but also a fiery literary critic

© Alamy, Wikipedia

The Temple
Whyt freres
Bridwell
Blak freres
Benans Castle
Parys Garden
The Bowll baytyng
The Beare baytyng
Wynchester
S Mary overyes
South wark

Timeline

1320

The Divine Comedy is completed
Dante Alighieri's epic poem recounts the journey of an unidentified traveller who makes his way through the seven levels of Hell. It is among the earliest examples of written Italian and considered one of the instigators of Renaissance writing.
c.1320

Adoration of the Lamb
Commissioned in the early 15th century, to brothers Hubert and Jan Van Eyck, the Ghent Altarpiece is a 12-panelled oil painting depicting several biblical scenes, as well as the central figures of John the Baptist, Christ and the Virgin Mary.
c.1432

The theory of art explained
Leon Battista Alberti completes his first of three treatises on art, 'De Pictura' (On Painting), in which he presents new theories of art and its place in the world. His book is read widely in Italy and elsewhere and is considered as being among the first works on art theory.
c.1435

Defining moment

The Gutenberg Bible is printed c.1455

German entrepreneur Johann Gutenberg first began experimenting with prototype printing press in around 1452, from his workshop in Mainz. Shortly after, in around 1455, he produced the very first printed bible. Though Chinese scholars had been mass-producing text centuries earlier, the Gutenberg Bible marked the birth of the printing press in Europe, enabling the distribution of books and pamphlets all over the continent. This meant ideas on faith, politics and art would spread faster and further than ever before.

The Last Supper
Perhaps Leonardo Da Vinci's most famous work, 'The Last Supper' is completed after three years of planning. His depiction of Christ and disciples is painted on the walls of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie near Milan.
1498

St Peter's Basilica is begun
Designed by several of the Old Masters of Italian Architecture, including Michelangelo, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Raphael and Donato Bramante, the first stones of St Peter's Basilica in Rome are placed.
c.1506

within and composed for his choir, appearing at all state occasions such as funerals, weddings and christenings. Among one of his most famous works is 'Gaude Gloriosa Dei Mater' (Rejoice Glorious Mother of God), composed for a six-part choir and written possibly near the end of Henry VIII's reign, though symbolically it would have been popular during Mary I's reign, given the subject matter of the Virgin Mary.

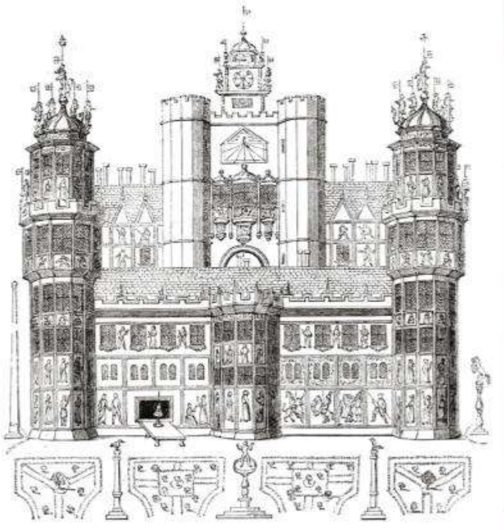
Of course, like any egoist king, Henry was also enthusiastic about his own image and his status of power. He commissioned Nonsuch Palace in 1538 to rival the grand royal buildings seen in France at the time, introducing some of the first Renaissance architecture styles to the country. To design Nonsuch's grand facades, Henry employed Nicholas Bellin of Modena, who had previously been working for the king's great rival, Francis I of France. Bellin was chiefly responsible for the ornate slate carvings covering the building, each depicting classical scenes from antiquity. Henry's other grand building projects included his palaces at Greenwich, Hampton Court and Whitehall, which he spent vast fortunes on renovating and re-shaping to his own taste and to signify his power. Inevitably all these grand buildings required fine artwork to fill them. Henry's taste in art varied, and he filled his halls with everything from historical battle scenes, to portraits of his ancestors, to iconic biblical imagery. In the 16th century, England had not yet produced a portrait artist of note to rival the brilliance of those emerging from the continent, so royal commissions for new masterpieces had to come from abroad. Antonio Toto and Pietro Torrigiani, both from Florence, each completed sculptures and furniture designs for the king, who was eager to surround himself in the latest splendour seen elsewhere in Europe.

However the most successful artist under the king's patronage was Hans Holbein The Younger, a German student of the humanist and philosopher Erasmus. Introduced to court by Anne Boleyn, Holbein served as the official royal painter from around 1532 until his death in 1543. He produced among the most enduring images of the king, as well as his courtiers, in many ways sparking an increased desire for the nobility to invest in the latest artistic talents from the continent.

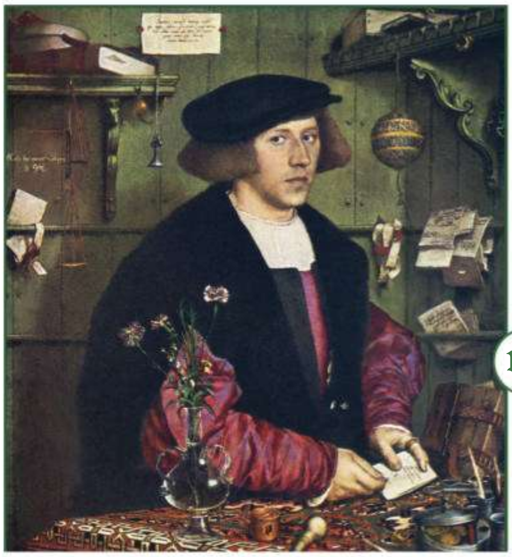
Undoubtedly the most celebrated aspects of the English Renaissance are its writers. Thomas More, the king's Lord Chancellor, was among the foremost scholars in England in his time, writing translations of ancient texts, as well as his own poetry and a lengthy work of fiction called *Utopia*. Though he is celebrated as a gifted social philosopher and one of the Renaissance's foremost humanist writers, More was entirely against the Protestant Reformation and Henry's abolition of the monasteries, and it was for this that he was eventually executed in 1535.

Rather than published works, it was within the tradition of court poetry, with manuscript verse being passed between small groups of close friends, that some of the greatest advances in English literature took place. Encouraged by the king, Henry's court was brimming with literary talent, such as Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard. These noblemen are credited with establishing the form of the English sonnet, which ▶

> *"Like any egoist king, Henry was enthusiastic about his own image"*



Nonsuch palace was Henry VIII's great architectural project, where he displayed all his wealth and prestige, as well as brought continental styles to England



Among the most celebrated painters of Henry VIII's court, Hans Holbein was responsible for many of the famous portraits of the king and his courtiers

The Prince circulates
Niccolo Machiavelli's most famous work, *The Prince*, is completed. Dedicated to the new ruler of Florence, Lorenzo de Medici, the text is a philosophical analysis of how best to govern and even conquer principalities.
c. 1513

The Reformation begins
In Germany Martin Luther publishes his translation of the New Testament, making it available to be read outside of the church. This sparks the beginnings of the Reformation in Europe.
c.1522

Defining moment

Plutarch's Lives translated 1579

The Greek biographer Plutarch chronicled the lives of famous figures from antiquity, such as Caesar, Alexander the Great and Cleopatra. After its French translation was published in 1559, English scholar Thomas North first translated it into English in around 1579. This translation made Plutarch's work widely accessible, opening up the interpretation and adaptation of his stories into verse and onto the stage. There is evidence to suggest that North was at least acquainted with Shakespeare, who explicitly borrowed from Plutarch when writing some of his most famous plays, including 'Antony and Cleopatra'.

PLUTAR
LIVES

1599

Defining moment

Michelangelo's 'David' is born c.1504

After three-and-a-half years' work, Michelangelo's 'David' is finally unveiled on the Piazza della Signoria, Florence. The completely nude depiction of David was not only intended as homage to classical Greek and Roman sculpture, but also a personification of Florence itself. By the 16th century the fragile republic was on the verge of collapse, and the confident depiction of the youthful, confident David embodied a future renewal of the city itself, as well as its underdog status against the Goliath of foreign powers. On creating 'David', Michelangelo challenged perceived artistic convention by stating that he was 'removing' extraneous matter, until all that was left was David – in a sense uncovering the essence of the art from within the marble itself.

Human anatomy explained
Belgian physician Andreas Vesalius publishes among the first studies of human anatomy; 'De Humani Corporis Fabrica' (On the Fabric of the Human Body). His work is the first of its kind as it was based on studying human dissections, and observing the internal functions of the body.
1543

The Globe is built
Using the timber from an older theatre in north London, Richard Burbage and his company of actors, with assistance from craftsmen, begin building The Globe Theatre in Southwark, south of the river.
1599

© Alamy, Wikipedia

would be picked up and adapted by the likes of Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Jonson and others. The form follows a structure of three quatrains (groups of four lines) and a final rhyming couplet, usually completing a witty conceit or whimsical flourish.

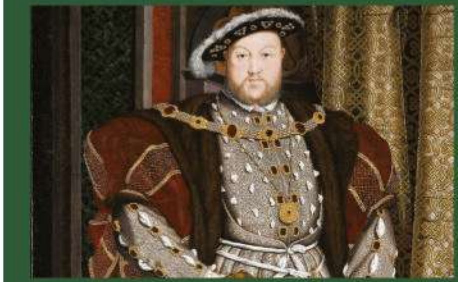
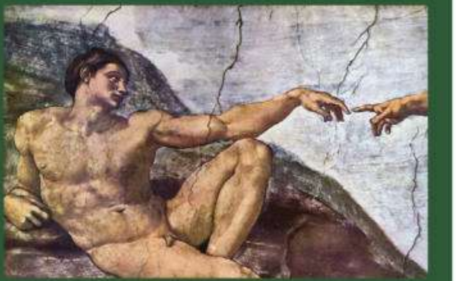
Both men were constantly in and out of the king's favour, each being closely linked with Anne Boleyn; Howard was Boleyn's first cousin, while Wyatt was rumoured to have been her lover. As a result of his often-fluctuating fortunes, Howard's verse in particular reflects on life, death, and man's place in the world. Like much Renaissance literature on the continent, the sonnets of the Tudor court draw heavily from classical references, while including idealistic images of the natural world and man's natural state within it – rooted in the Renaissance humanist tradition. Similar to their counterparts in France and Italy, the poets of the Tudor court were also scholars, engrossed in the writers from antiquity such as Ovid and Homer. If it can be said that Henry's reign saw the importing of the continent's Renaissance in art and architecture, then the Elizabethan era saw the rise of the great playwrights and poets England would soon come to celebrate. Like her father, Elizabeth was a gifted scholar, and had a passion for the arts. Her court was constantly filled with musicians and singers, while plays, or royal masques as they were called, also gained immense popularity.

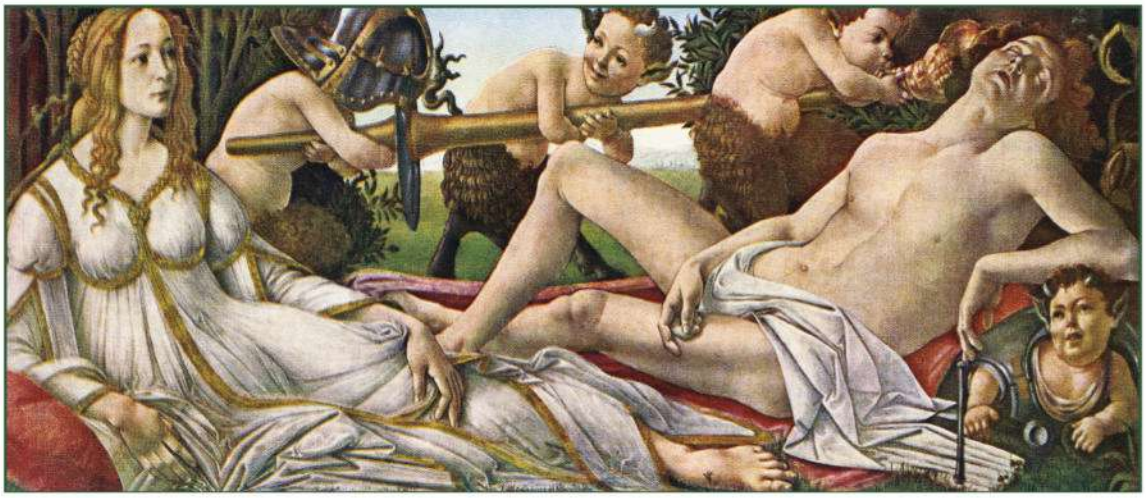
In 1576 the first play house in London was opened in Shoreditch, just north of the city wall, by James Burbage, an actor turned businessman. Twenty-two years later in 1598 his son Richard, along with his acting company, would dismantle this playhouse, and transport it to Bankside, in Southwark, where it would be reconstructed as the Globe Theatre. Under the patronage of Henry Carey, First Baron Hunsdon, The Lord Chamberlain's Men playing company gave regular performances at The Globe and at Elizabeth's court. During the latter part of the 16th century, London's population soared to well over 200,000 (a huge number at the time). As people travelled to the capital to seek their fortunes, some of the greatest writers and artists became inevitably drawn to the booming theatre scene of Bankside. As well as Shakespeare, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Samuel Daniel, Christopher Marlowe and others all found great success in the playhouses, where there even emerged a rivalry between playing companies and theatres.

Just as England's cultural Renaissance came much later than its continental cousins', so too did it begin its exploration overseas long after its rivals had started. While Spain in particular had been reaping the benefits found in the New World for decades, it wasn't until Francis Drake's expedition to circumnavigate the globe began in 1577, that England began to reap the benefits of overseas exploration. New, more efficient ship designs made vessels stronger, faster, and easier to handle. This made captains more daring and

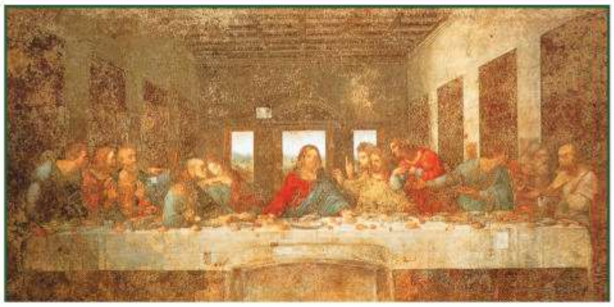
Europe's two Renaissances

HOW THE MOVEMENT DIFFERED IN ENGLAND AND MAINLAND EUROPE

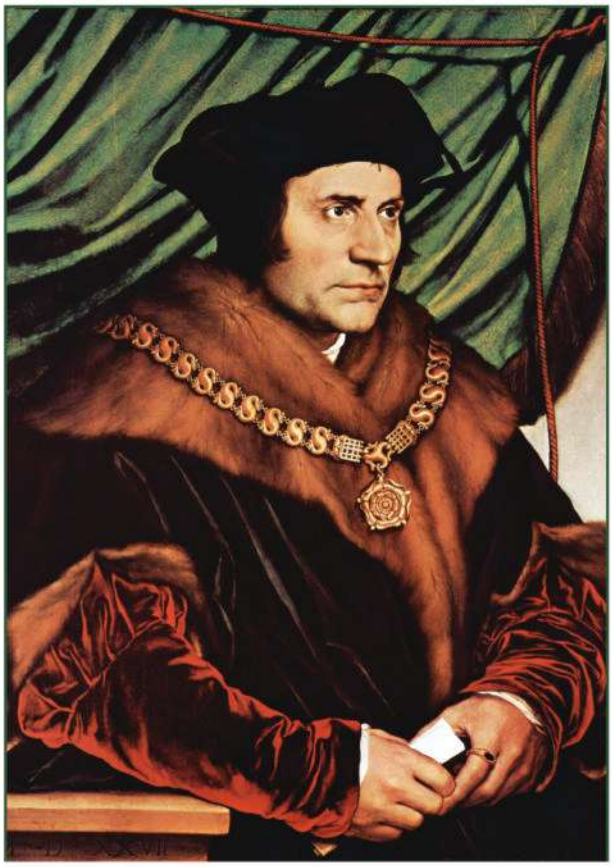
	England	Mainland Europe
		
Music	After the English Reformation, the place of music in church and in life changed dramatically. The leading composers of the Tudor were all connected inextricably with the church, or the royal court, or both. With the emergence of printed sheet music, the flow of compositions from the continent steadily grew more and more in popularity.	Groups of musicians on the continent could travel between territories much easier than their English counterparts, and would perform at royal courts and noble houses in several different countries. Franco-Flemish composers such as Josquin des Prez were incredibly popular in the early stages of the 16th century, and were still heavily influenced by Catholic mass.
Art	Many of the most famous painters to work in England were from the continent. For example Hans Holbein The Younger, a German artist, produced one the most famous portraits of Henry VIII in 1536. Henry also commissioned copies to be made of tapestries designed by Raphael, which had previously hung in the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel, in the Vatican.	Among the most celebrated sculptures, portraits and religious paintings that we now consider to typify the Renaissance, the majority grew out of the traditions and practices of Florence's artist guilds. Soon the Florentine school – as it became known – produced painters and sculptors that were eagerly sought after by all of Europe's nobility and royalty.
Architecture	As the most popular and sought-after architectural styles in the era were drawn from Italian influences, as with portraiture, many royal building projects commissioned Florentine craftsmen. It wasn't until much later, with the likes of Inigo Jones, that English designs, albeit with heavily Italian influence, were popularised in London.	Drawing from the ridiculously fertile crop of artistic talent from Florence and elsewhere, the rich and the powerful all commissioned the finest visionaries for their building projects. Much Renaissance architecture was typified by huge commanding domes and soaring pillars, in imitation of classical Roman buildings.
Literature	English courtly poetry thrived in the 16th century, with manuscript verse passed between small groups of close friends, establishing new trends in written English. Soon after the introduction of the printing press, literacy levels throughout the country soared, and London's theatres housed some of the Renaissance's most brilliant writers.	Interest and interpretation of classical writers such as Homer and Ovid, sparked a new trend of translation and re-invention across the continent. The foremost change to literature on the continent came with the production of the Gutenberg Bible, the first book to be mass-produced in Europe.
Medicine	Alchemy, quack doctors, even wise women and witches still made up the majority of medical authorities in Tudor England, which was a similar situation to the continent. Physicians were available for only the very wealthiest in society, and commonly they were immigrants from abroad, such as Dr Rodrigo López, Elizabeth I's personal physician.	Among the greatest advances in medicine and the studies of human anatomy came from the mainland. Though da Vinci was dissecting and analysing human bodies much earlier, his work was not used to further the understanding of surgery or physiology. Andreas Vesalius was among the first doctors to use dissection as a means to understand the human body.



Sandro Botticelli was one of Florence's most prolific painters and was hugely influential throughout the continent



Painted directly on the wall of an abbey, Da Vinci's 'Last Supper' was unstable from the beginning and has been restored so many times many believe none of the original remains



Sir Thomas More was one of the foremost scholars in Henry VIII's court, and one of the most celebrated humanist writers in the era

crews more willing to risk the vastness of the Pacific and beyond.

Spices, sugar and tobacco flooded into London, bringing with them the opportunity for even more profit, while gold stolen from Spanish treasure ships was returned from royally sanctioned privateer missions. New companies and businesses sprang up constantly, and new monopolies granted by Elizabeth created vast fortunes for the profit of London's merchants.

However, not every aspect of the Elizabethan Renaissance was fixed in the material world. The Queen's close advisor and personal astrologer Dr John Dee is one of the most celebrated and controversial scholars in the Elizabethan court. A brilliant mathematician, philosopher and alchemist, Dee struck a peculiar balance between science, magic and the divine in his work.

As new trade links with far-off Russia in the east and the Americas in the west were required, Dee's skills were called into service, using his knowledge of the night sky to help teach captains new methods of navigation. Dee was even consulted by Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced the Gregorian Calendar in 1582, though England would not adopt this until 1752.

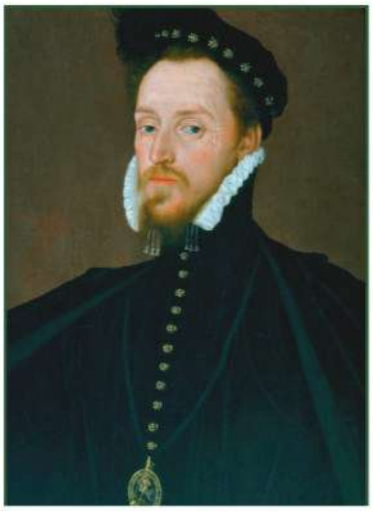
The death of Elizabeth in 1603 marked the end of the Tudor era in England, and in many ways the end of its unique Renaissance. By the beginning of James I's reign, Europe was already beginning to change once again. As the Reformation spread, and Protestant states began to grow in power, a Catholic counter-reformation would eventually bring about the Thirty Years' War. As fighting and unrest ravaged the continent, funding turned from the arts and literature, to arms and armies. In England, the arts would have their own unique struggle against increasingly powerful puritan elements in London, who in particular saw the play houses of Southwark as bawdy pits of vice. Soon a new civil war broke out, this time between parliament and the monarch, and the play houses were closed for decades. As it did some two hundred years previous, the country would be irreversibly changed by war, and remade in its aftermath – another rebirth was at hand.

Patronage in the Renaissance

During the Renaissance period, royalty, nobility and even the increasingly wealthy merchant class all desired to possess the finest art to display their status. They also commissioned portraits of themselves and their family, to become 'immortalised' on canvas, dressed in their best clothes and even surrounded by mythological or religious iconography. Poets and writers also often found rich patrons to fund their work, who in return would receive plays and poems dedicated to them. Some writers would even live with their patron, serving as tutors to the family's children.

For many skilled artisans the ultimate patronage was that of a monarch, from whom the greatest accolades and financing was to be sought. Shakespeare's theatre company was initially patronised by Henry Carey, First Baron Hunsdon, and accordingly became known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men. After James I's ascension to the throne in 1603, the king patronised the company himself, thereby dubbing it The King's Men. Through this sponsorship the company went on to flourish, and in turn meant that the company could run more performances.

In Florence much of the work by some of the most famous humanists, scholars, artists and poets, was accommodated by Lorenzo de Medici, the de facto ruler of the city. Da Vinci, Botticelli, Angelo Poliziano, Michelangelo, to name just a few, all benefited greatly from the political connections, influence and power Lorenzo could lend them. Skilled artists were also regularly employed by the church. Michelangelo's 'David', for instance, was an original commission by the Cathedral of Florence, while da Vinci's 'Last Supper' was painted for the Santa Maria delle Grazie, in the city of Milan.



As Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey became the patron of Shakespeare's company, which accordingly became known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men

© Alamy, Wikipedia

HANS HOLBEIN

MORE THAN A TUDOR ARTIST

The favourite painter of Henry VIII was a wonder in his time and gave us a time capsule to the 16th century

WRITTEN BY FRANNY MOYLE

EXPERT BIO

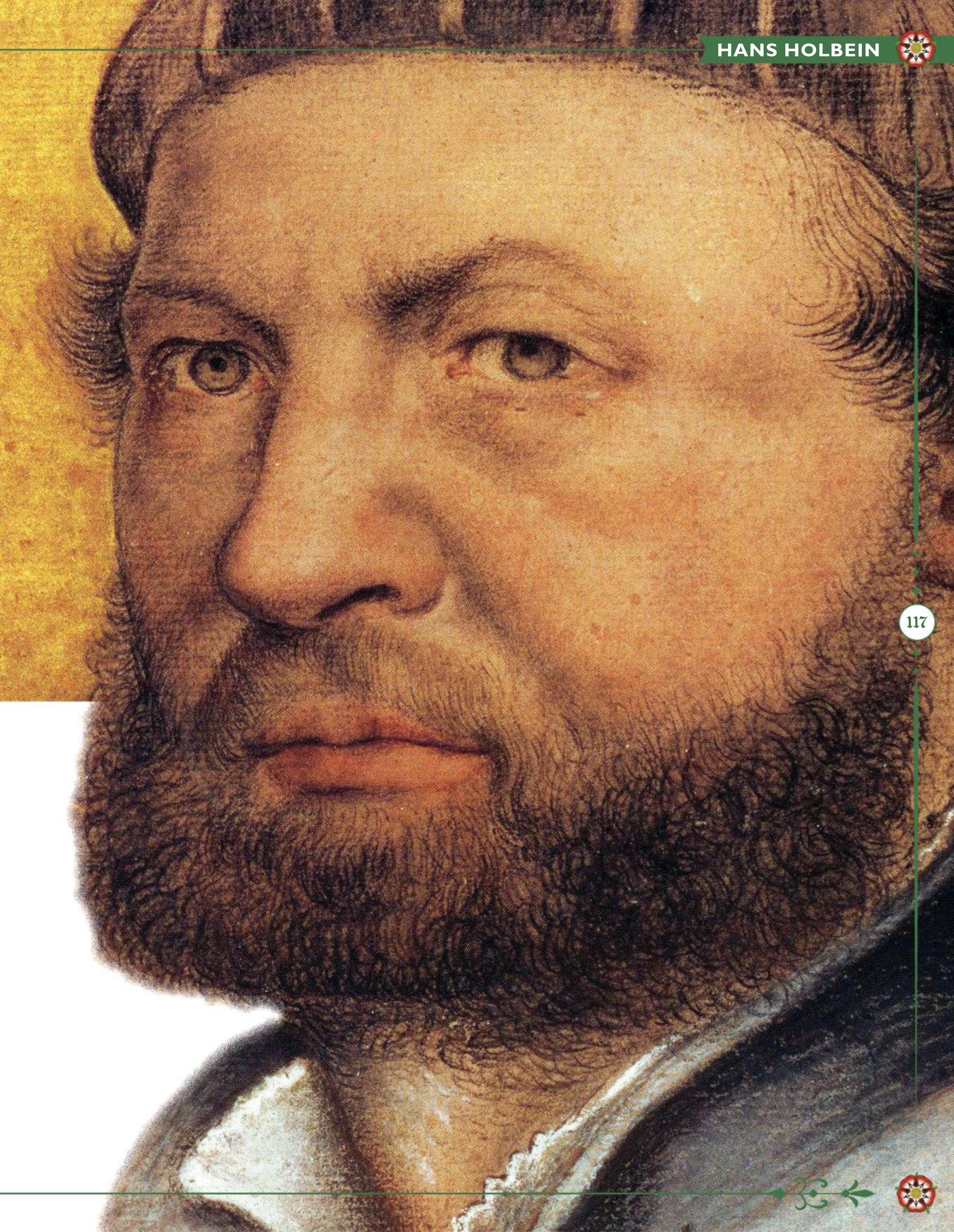
Franny Moyle is the author of several works of history, including Constance: The Tragic and Scandalous Life of Mrs Oscar Wilde and Desperate Romantics: The Private Lives of the Pre-Raphaelites, which was adapted into a BBC drama. Her latest book on Hans Holbein is available now.

Even if you don't know much about Hans Holbein the Younger, the 16th century German artist who spent the second half of his career as Henry VIII's court painter, you are likely to know his portraits of the king. That imposing figure of the monarch: his legs spread wide, his shoulders broadened by the huge fur collar he wears, his hands resting on his hip and dagger, and his gaze trained directly on the viewer. It's an image of supreme power that has defined Henry for the last 500 years and has graced the cover of just about every book about the Tudor period, from the Ladybird books of yesteryear to the most recent biographies of England's endlessly fascinating king. However, Holbein was far more than the king's portraitist. One of the finest painters in the history of art, his reputation was built on his ability to draw and paint people with such convincing verisimilitude that it was as if they were almost alive. In today's post-photographic era the experience of seeing a carbon copy of someone seems less impressive, but in the 16th century this was considered a wonder. His portraits would have been seen as exceptional novelties with a mesmerising effect. But portraiture was by no means Holbein's sole output. Before he came to England in 1526, he had secured a reputation as a master of devotional religious works, large-scale mural painting and much more.

Few documentary records regarding Holbein's life exist, but there is some evidence that he was a recognised child prodigy. He was born in 1497 in Augsburg, Germany, the son of esteemed painter Hans Holbein the Elder, much of whose work hangs today in that city's museum of art, the Staatsgalerie. In two religious works, painted in 1502 and 1504 respectively, the older Holbein smuggled a portrait of his young son Hans into the narrative. In both, the composition draws particular attention to the juvenile Holbein and this may well suggest that Hans Holbein the Younger was celebrated as a local wonder from an early age. Certainly by the time he was in his late teens Holbein had moved to Basel in Switzerland and had embarked on a celebrated career. It was here in 1521 that he created one of the most astonishing devotional images ever painted: Dead Christ in the Tomb.

Christ is painted full-size, dead and emaciated, flat on his back in an open catacomb similar to those used in ancient Rome. The lime-wood Holbein has painted on has been cut into a shallow rectangle, the same length and height of the imagined space containing the Messiah. Christ's body is viewed side on, his rib cage just centimetres from the roof of his grave. His head lolls to one side to reveal a gaping hollow mouth. His eyes, partially open, are unseeing.

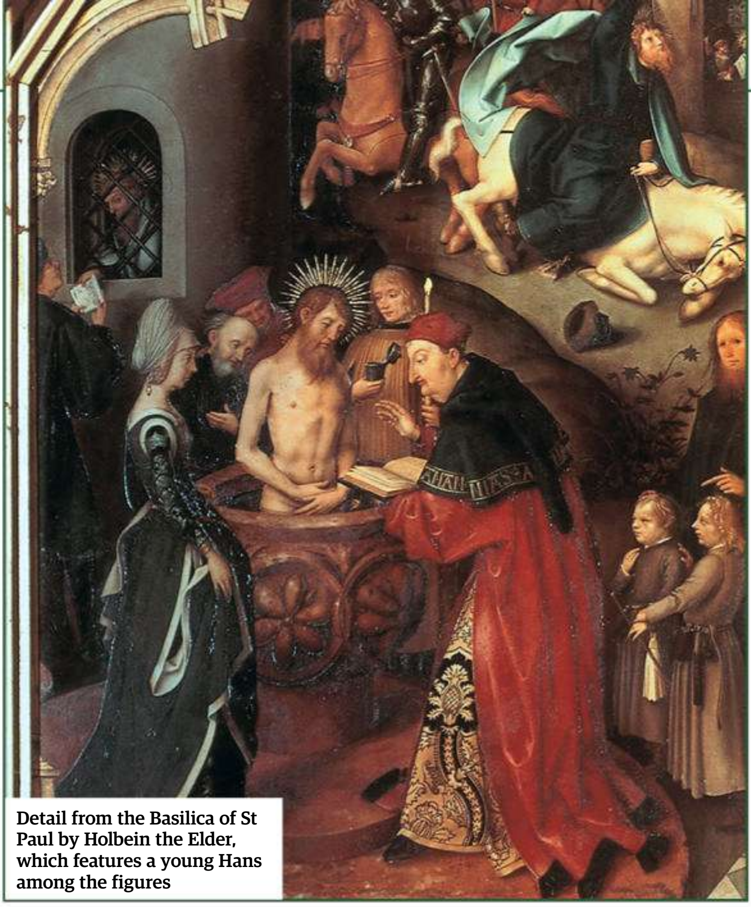
In his painting of Christ, Holbein takes verisimilitude in religious art to a new level. The full-size figure is just the first indicator that the artist intends this work to be as convincing as possible, an illusion that could, for an instant, be taken for the real thing. The legend is that to best give a sense of Christ post-mortem Holbein drew from a corpse he found



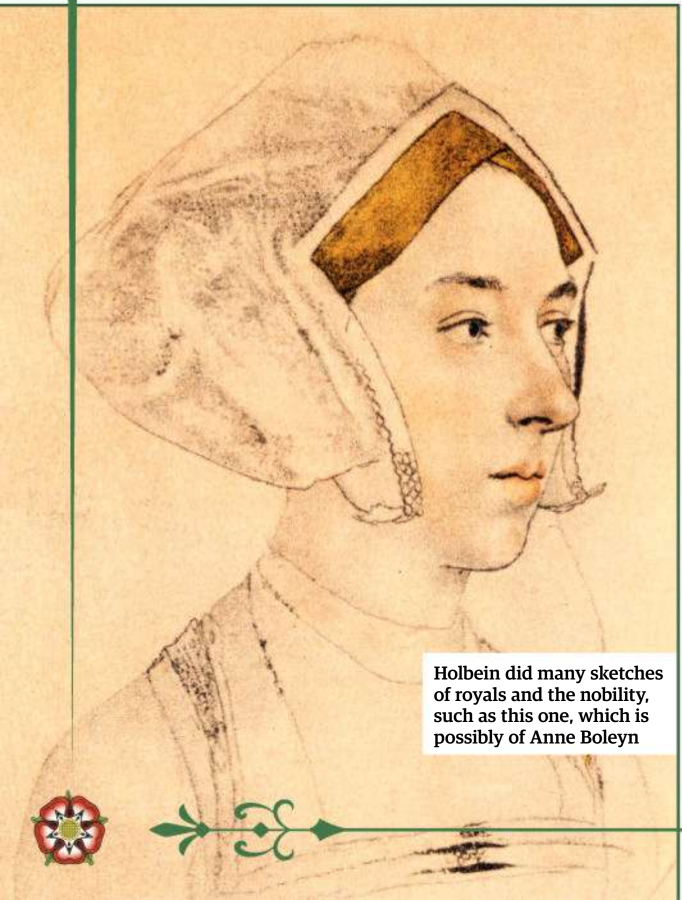
in the Rhine. Christ's hair is painted with astonishing detail, individual strands clearly visible. This minute observation is continued around the eyes, where each single eyelash is noted. The parted lips are desiccated and swollen, the gums and teeth exposed. There is bruising on the side of the face. The anatomy and musculature of the body are persuasive. Here are the thin remnants of a man who has been starved during crucifixion, the sinews and muscles perished, his ribs visible, the skin suffering from that strange sagging that death brings when blood stops pumping.

Painting of such virtuoso realism was an exhilarating rarity at this time, and the impact of Dead Christ would have been considerable. Not least because Holbein also added perspectival trompe l'oeil to give the illusion that parts of Christ's body were overhanging the catacomb. Christ's right hand marks the niche's boundary, his bent fourth and fifth fingers protruding beyond it. The heel of Christ's right foot lies on the very edge of the recess, the foot and toes therefore also extending beyond the cavity in which the body is held. In this way Holbein is placing Christ and the viewer of the painting in the same spatial dimension, and suggests that Christ is present in the here and now. As such he becomes a 'memento mori' reminding the viewer of his or her own inevitable death as well as Christ's actual suffering.

With one final flourish of genius, Holbein goes further. The original title of the painting, Iesus Nazarus rex J(udaeorum), is still inscribed on the frame, and is a device used to compress time. For as he or she reads this title, the viewer is taken back to biblical Palestine where Jesus was mockingly crowned 'King of the Jews' and Christianity was yet to be born. In time-shifting the viewer into the past, he or she becomes a witness to Jesus' entombment, a character in a story that will ultimately lead to Christ's Resurrection. Paintings such as this should have secured Holbein's career in Germany for the rest of his life. However, the Reformation put paid to that.



Detail from the Basilica of St Paul by Holbein the Elder, which features a young Hans among the figures



Holbein did many sketches of royals and the nobility, such as this one, which is possibly of Anne Boleyn

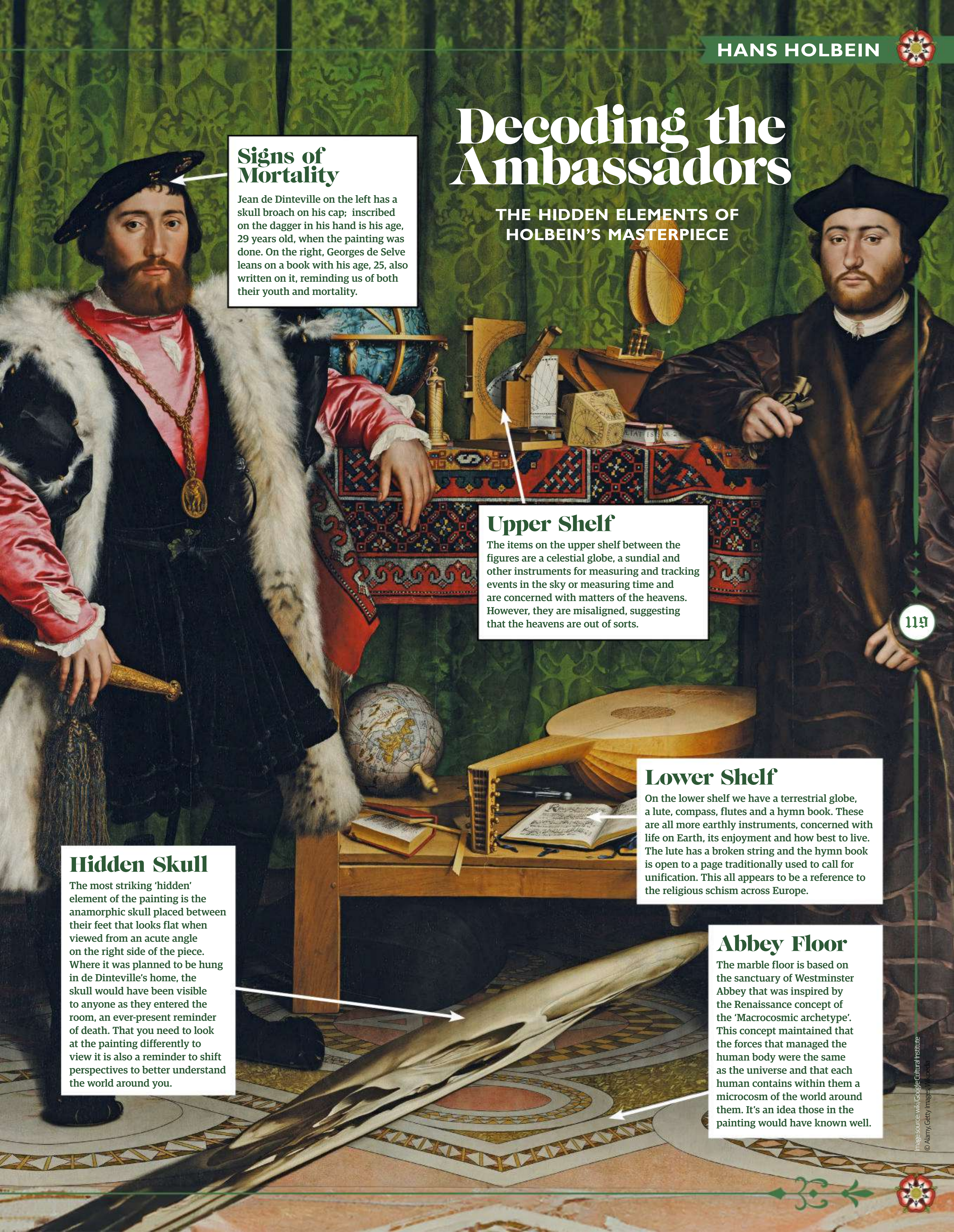
What began with Lutheranism in 1517 and would ultimately become known as Protestantism led to a wave of iconoclasm across Northern Europe in which religious work, made under the auspices of the Catholic Church, was destroyed. Painters, no matter how talented, found their livelihoods severely compromised. Although Holbein was not solely reliant on religious commissions, the more ascetic Protestant regime affected his other work too. He had become famous for huge trompe l'oeil murals for the homes of wealthy merchants; for providing lavish illustration for books; for ornate decoration of weaponry and jewellery; and, of course, for making magnificent portraits. By 1526 much of this was considered far too indulgent for the newly Protestant residents of Basel, so Holbein sought a new career in what was at this time a Catholic England where Protestantism was kept at bay and where the appetite for portraiture was strong.

Holbein arrived in London with letters of introduction to Sir Thomas More, one of Henry's senior statesmen. Immediately absorbed into More's household, it was just a matter of weeks before he was working for the court. Despite a brief return to Basel between 1528 and 1532, London became the painter's home for the rest of his life and the place where he made his most famous work. His portraits of Sir Thomas More and Sir Thomas Cromwell have become the defining images of these powerful men and, as they hang opposite one another today in The Frick Collection in New York, their bitter rivalry. Meanwhile Holbein's portraits of Henry VIII, and his wives Jane Seymour and Anne of Cleves, allow us an uncanny sense of intimacy with long-dead royalty.

However it is The Ambassadors, Holbein's strange portrait of two French diplomats, that is arguably his most compelling work. As famous for its oddity as for its genius, the huge picture features Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve standing at either end of a buffet, on which lie a number of astronomical and astrological

Decoding the Ambassadors

THE HIDDEN ELEMENTS OF HOLBEIN'S MASTERPIECE



Signs of Mortality

Jean de Dinteville on the left has a skull broach on his cap; inscribed on the dagger in his hand is his age, 29 years old, when the painting was done. On the right, Georges de Selve leans on a book with his age, 25, also written on it, reminding us of both their youth and mortality.

Upper Shelf

The items on the upper shelf between the figures are a celestial globe, a sundial and other instruments for measuring and tracking events in the sky or measuring time and are concerned with matters of the heavens. However, they are misaligned, suggesting that the heavens are out of sorts.

Lower Shelf

On the lower shelf we have a terrestrial globe, a lute, compass, flutes and a hymn book. These are all more earthly instruments, concerned with life on Earth, its enjoyment and how best to live. The lute has a broken string and the hymn book is open to a page traditionally used to call for unification. This all appears to be a reference to the religious schism across Europe.

Hidden Skull

The most striking 'hidden' element of the painting is the anamorphic skull placed between their feet that looks flat when viewed from an acute angle on the right side of the piece. Where it was planned to be hung in de Dinteville's home, the skull would have been visible to anyone as they entered the room, an ever-present reminder of death. That you need to look at the painting differently to view it is also a reminder to shift perspectives to better understand the world around you.

Abbey Floor

The marble floor is based on the sanctuary of Westminster Abbey that was inspired by the Renaissance concept of the 'Macrocosmic archetype'. This concept maintained that the forces that managed the human body were the same as the universe and that each human contains within them a microcosm of the world around them. It's an idea those in the painting would have known well.

Image source: wiki/Google Cultural Institute
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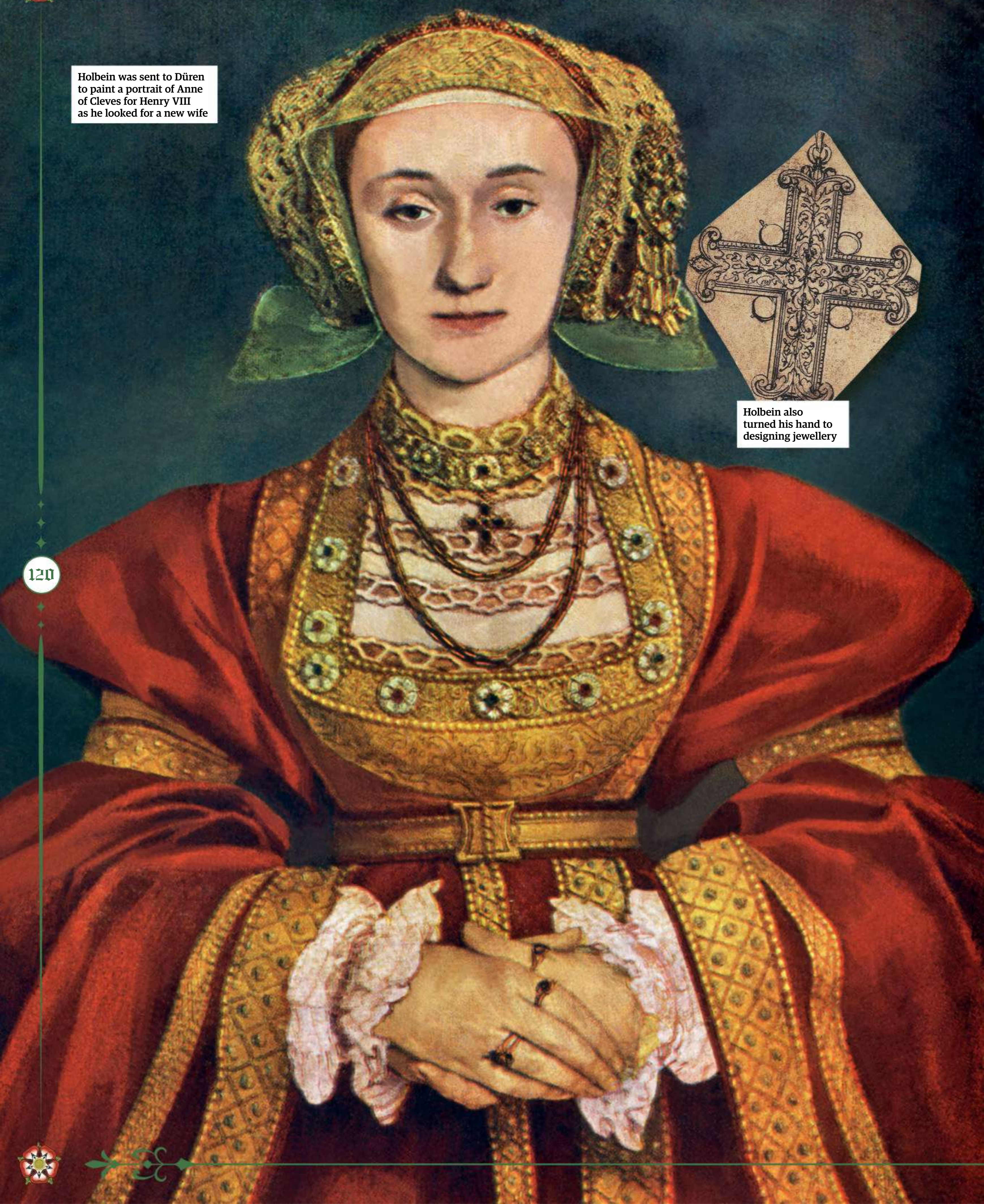
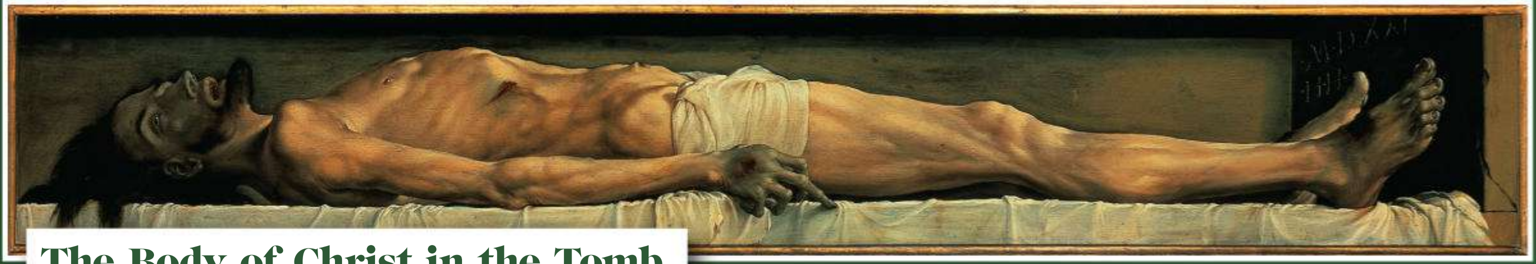


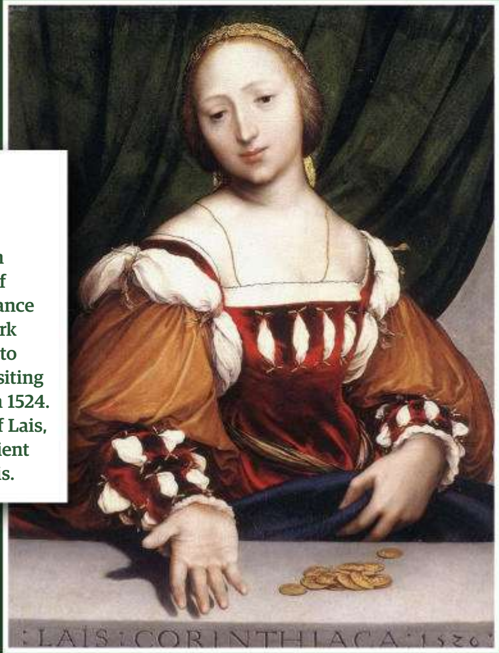
Holbein was sent to Düren to paint a portrait of Anne of Cleves for Henry VIII as he looked for a new wife

Holbein also turned his hand to designing jewellery



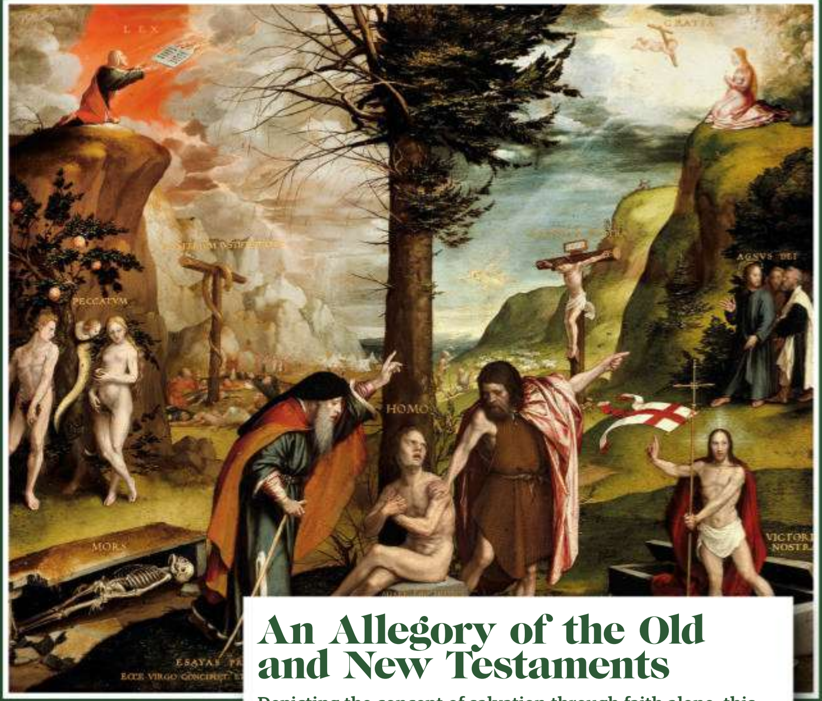
The Body of Christ in the Tomb

Drawing from humanist thinking that was sweeping through Europe, this is Holbein's famous depiction of Christ after crucifixion in the tomb. The wound detail and emaciated look of Christ is deliberately provocative. It's possible Holbein used a real corpse as reference.



Lais of Corinth

This work has been compared to that of thr Italian Renaissance masters, whose work Holbein was likely to have seen when visiting the French court in 1524. The soft features of Lais, a courtesan of Ancient Greece, point to this.

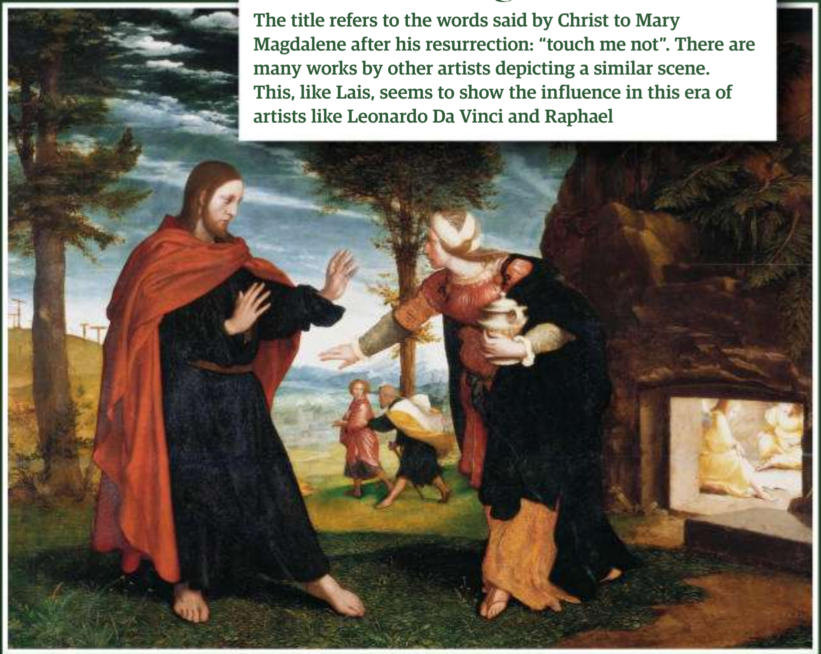


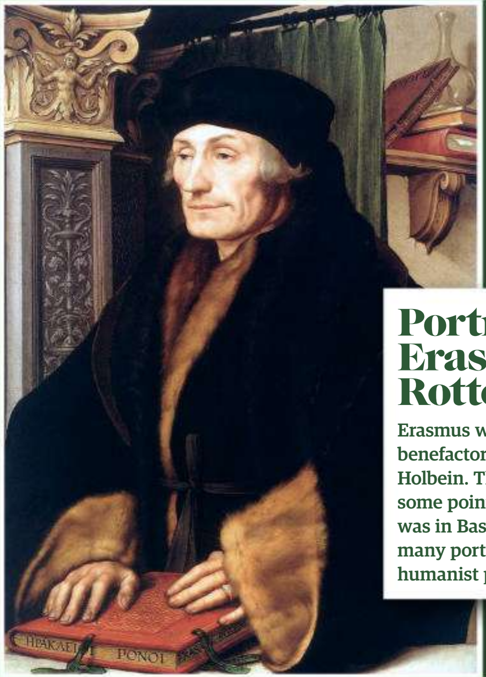
An Allegory of the Old and New Testaments

Depicting the concept of salvation through faith alone, this painting draws strongly from the new Lutheran school of Christianity and was likely commissioned by a Lutheran. On the left are images of the Old Testament and on right images from the New Testament.

Noli Me Tangere

The title refers to the words said by Christ to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection: "touch me not". There are many works by other artists depicting a similar scene. This, like Lais, seems to show the influence in this era of artists like Leonardo Da Vinci and Raphael





Portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam

Erasmus was a huge benefactor and client of Holbein. The two met at some point when Holbein was in Basel and he painted many portraits of the humanist philosopher.

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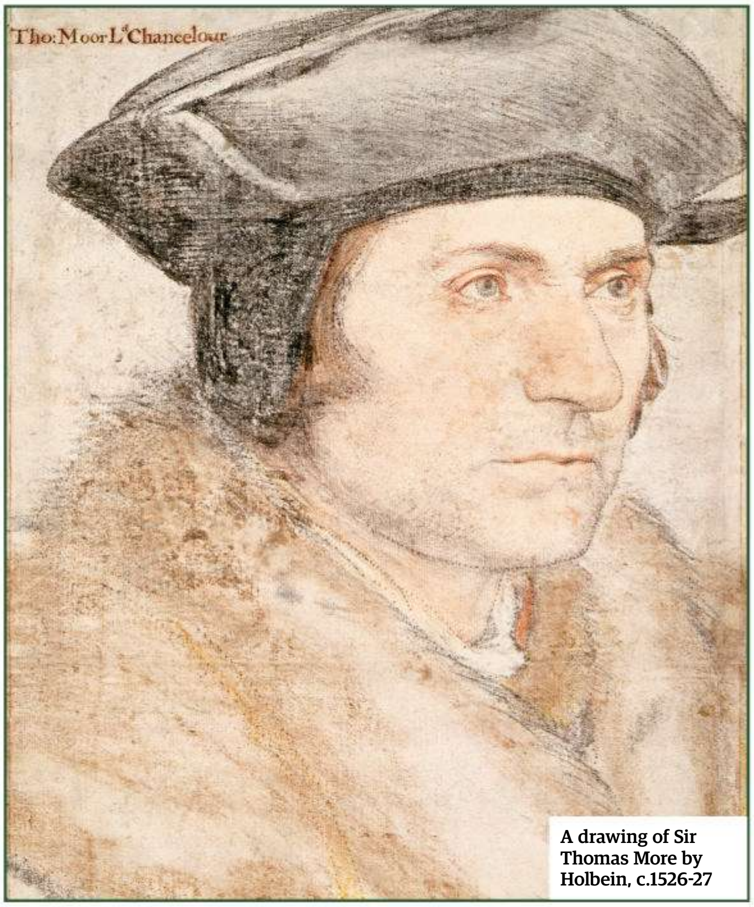
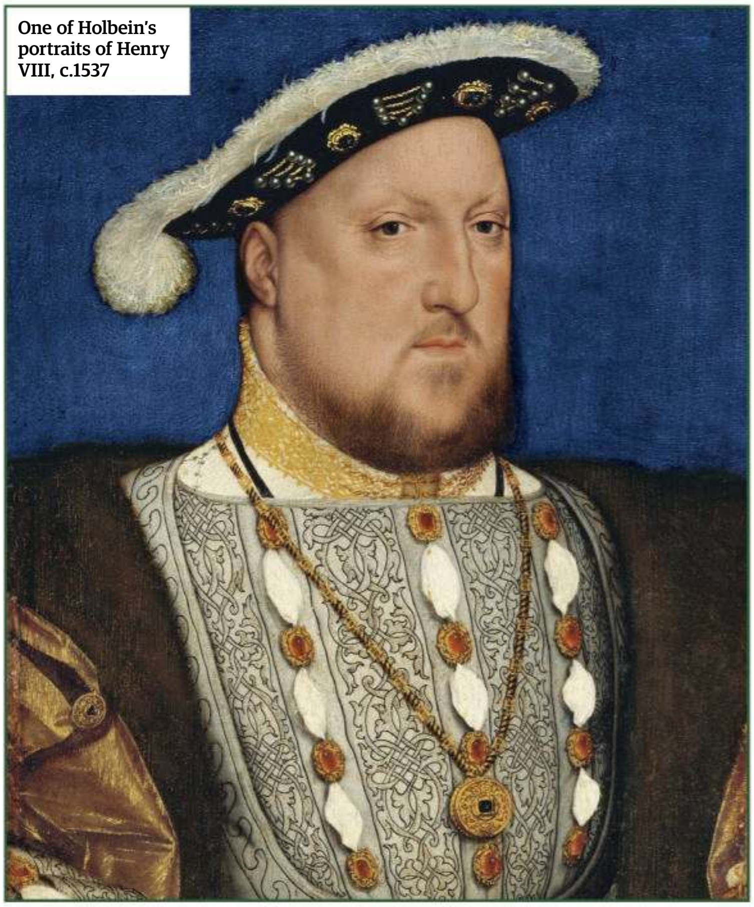


A drawing of Sir Thomas More by Holbein, c.1526-27



One of Holbein's portraits of Henry VIII, c.1537

items, as well as a lute, a globe and books. There is something awkward about the composition, as if the men have also been 'arranged' around these objects, their direct gaze challenging the onlooker to decipher what this strange painting might possibly mean. Also peculiar is the fact that these two men are together in the first place, in the kind of double portrait normally reserved for a man and his wife. And then of course there is the weird thing that hovers between them. What looks like a baguette slants across the panel in a totally different plane of vision, floating in an imaginary space between the ambassadors and the onlooker. Here is another memento mori, but one that is only understood when one views the painting from the extreme right, at which point the ovoid brown object transforms through anamorphic perspective to reveal itself as a human skull.

The Ambassadors was intended as a conceit, one that demanded an unusual level of involvement from the viewer. This was more than a portrait per se, it was a discussion point, a debate, or a game that de Dinteville, for whom the painting was made, could initiate when introducing people to the work. In the painting Holbein offers a constellation of references that identify and contextualize his subjects. His painting is in effect a map that, properly decoded, tells you all you need to know about de Dinteville at the moment his likeness was made, his status and the political climate in which he lived.

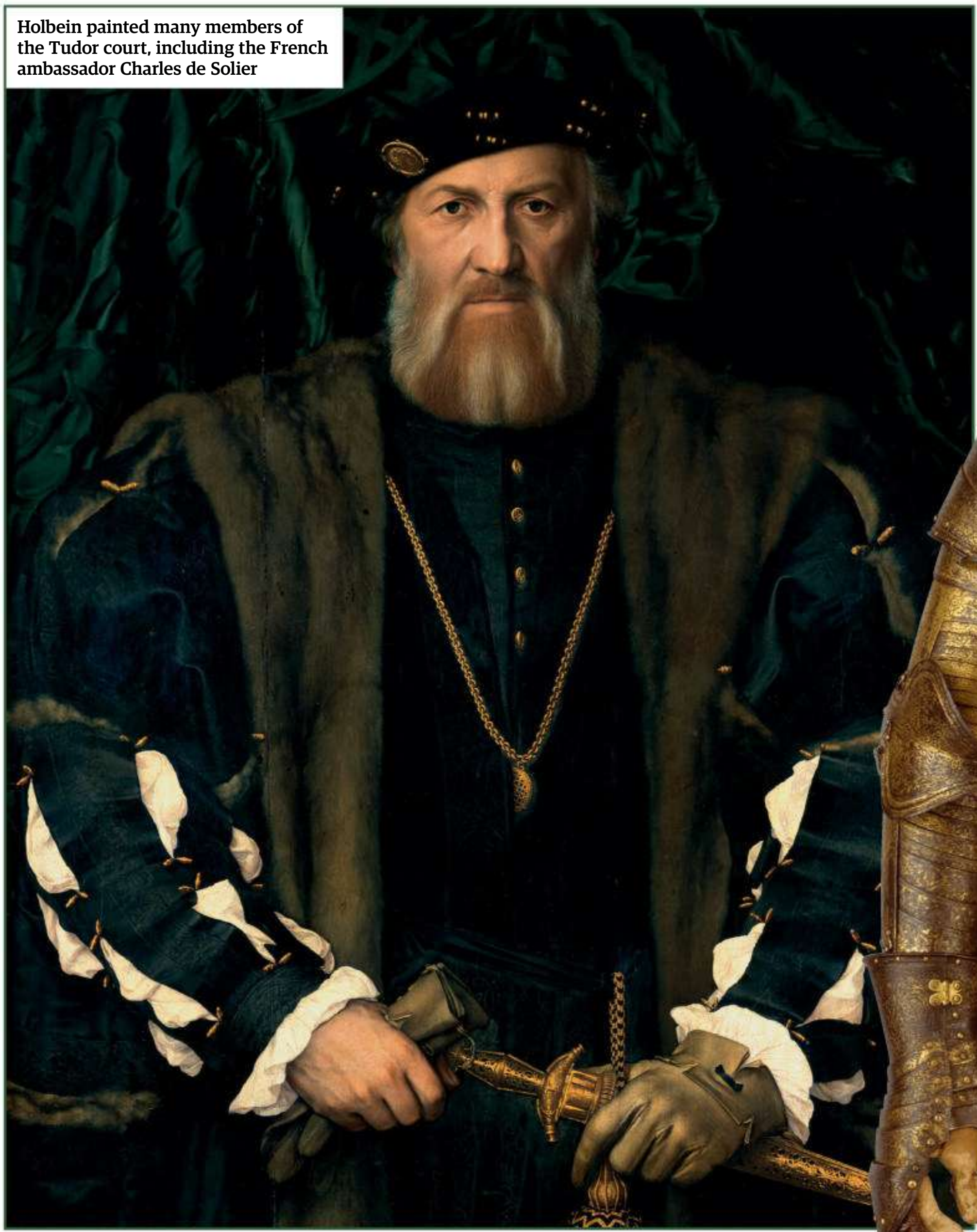
De Dinteville is on the left, magnificent in a slashed pink satin doublet and sleeves over which he wears a tunic of black velvet, and a silk coat lined with lynx fur. Around his neck is the Order of St Michael, awarded him in 1531. On his cap he sports a fashionable badge bearing the image of a skull - another reminder of human mortality. Contemporaries may well have recognised this outfit as that worn by him to Anne Boleyn's coronation in 1533 in which he played a major role, not only forming part of the coronation parade but commissioning the guard of honour of a dozen French men that led it. In his right hand is an ornate dagger, 'engraved' with his age: AET SUAE 29. This reinforces the portrait's date as 1533, since this was de Dinteville's age in this year, when he was the French ambassador in London.

De Dinteville was the Seigneur of Polisy, and his hometown is marked on the globe on the lower shelf of the buffet. There is word play in the misspelling of the place name as 'Policy' - after all what do ambassadors do all day if not deal with just that? The cities of Paris and Lyon are also noted, cities where de Dinteville would have regularly attended the French court.

The globe has been customised by Holbein to emphasise certain characteristics of the world in 1533. Nuremberg is singled out, the intellectual heart of liberal Germany; then Lyon, its French equivalent. The religious divisions of the world are also alluded to in these centres, since both had significant associations with Lutheransim. Meanwhile Rome marks the centre of Catholicism and Jerusalem that of Islamic puissance. Red lines crossing the globe represent the territorial division of the Americas between Spain and Portugal. The international political and religious conflicts of the time are suggested by a book on arithmetic featured just below the globe, held open by a set square at a page dedicated to division.

The role of the ambassador is, of course, to negotiate to achieve resolution and harmony on the world stage. The reference to diplomatic endeavour is continued by Holbein's depiction of a lute with a broken string on the lower shelf of the buffet. In popular literature of the time, this had become an established emblem for diplomacy. Just as a lute with a broken string cannot achieve proper harmony, in political negotiations a pact can be ruined by just one party failing to agree. However, the lute was also a symbol of accord and heavenly harmony, and so here it not only suggests discord but also the balm to soothe it.

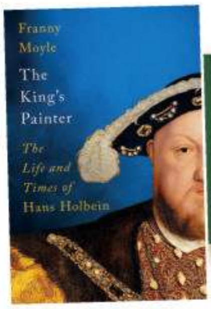
As to de Selve, he is shown standing on the right, clad in a floor-length fur-lined damask coat. His age is inscribed on the closed pages of a book on which he leans - he is 25. He serves as a supplementary coordinate to locate the date of the portrait. De Selve was only in England for a few weeks in the spring of 1533, when he joined de Dinteville in sensitive diplomatic negotiations to secure French support for the controversial Boleyn marriage, so the painting reflects this moment in time.



Holbein painted many members of the Tudor court, including the French ambassador Charles de Solier

There are even more allusions to Henry VIII's second marriage in the painting: on the top shelf of the buffet a cylindrical sundial is set to 11 April 11 1533, the date that Henry VIII announced his marriage to Boleyn to his court. Meanwhile the beautiful floor on which the ambassadors stand is based on the 'Cosmati' pavement in Westminster Abbey, on which Boleyn stood to be crowned Queen. The ambassadors' arrangement in the painting, standing as if husband and wife, now makes sense as yet another reference to Henry's marriage to his second queen. Might Boleyn have commissioned the painting in gratitude to de Dinteville for his crucial role in endorsing her marriage on the international stage? This remains a strong possibility. But above all the painting is a reminder that Holbein's work, carefully observed, remains a portal to understanding past worlds.

The anamorphic skull that is so very prominent in The Ambassadors is also a reminder of just how perilous life was in 16th century Europe. War, famine and above all plague were facts of life that not even the most skilled politician could negotiate. Holbein himself fell prey to a bout of plague that descended on London in 1543 and cut short a career that promised so much more.



The King's Painter
by Franny Moyle is available now, published by Head of Zeus. You can get a signed copy at Frannymoyle.com

This suit of armour was likely a gift from Henry VIII to a French ambassador, decorated by Holbein

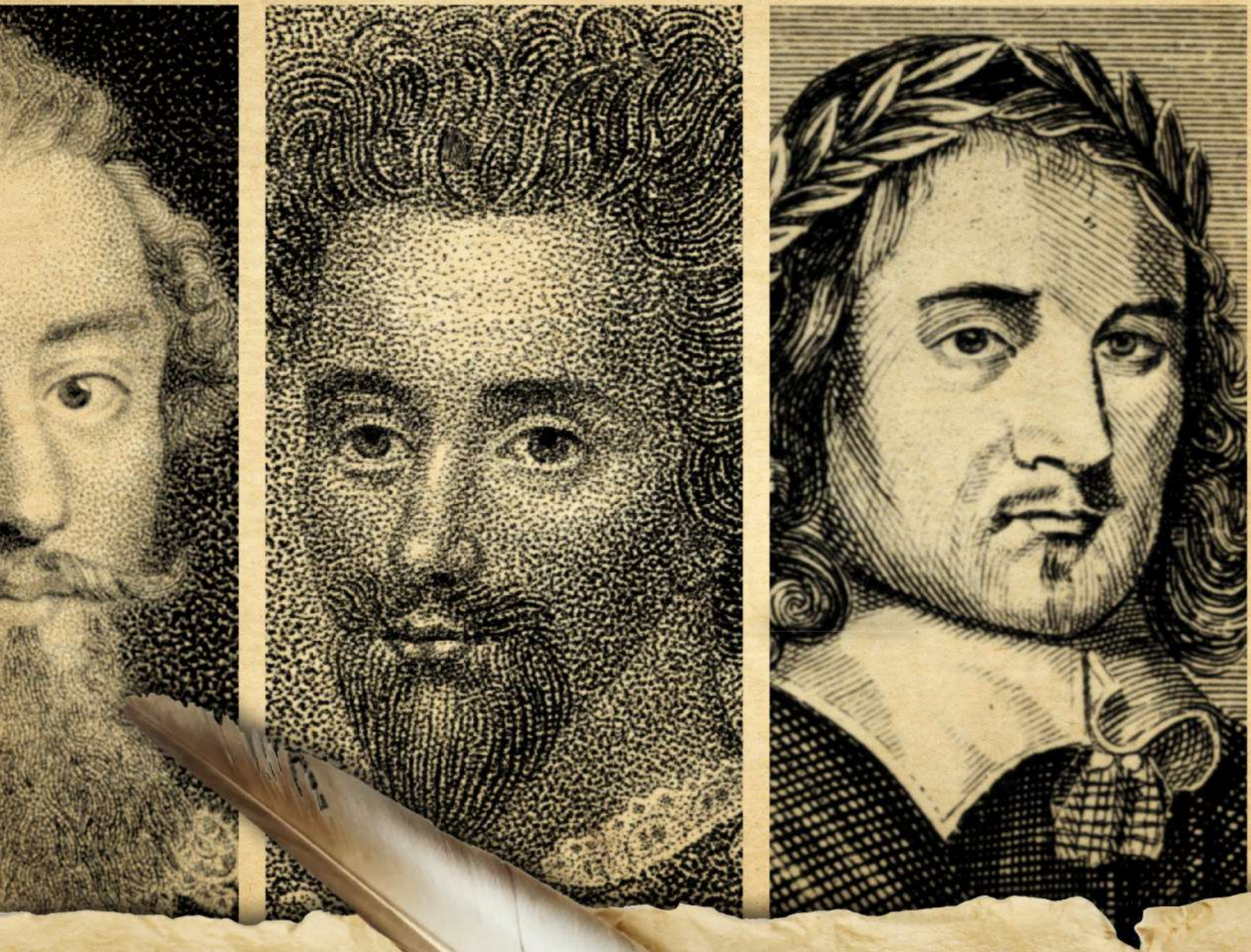
© Alamy, Getty Images, Wikipedia

Shakespeare's Scoundrels

Elizabethan theatre may be held in high regard today, but its often squalid and popular roots ran deep. Professor Elizabeth Schafer guides us through this fascinating era

WRITTEN BY JONATHAN GORDON

LEFT TO RIGHT William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Middleton



The name William Shakespeare today is associated with high art and prestige performance. However, in his own time Shakespeare's name, if it were known by many at all, was associated with the lowest order of entertainment. As a playwright, he worked in an industry that sat side by side with bloodsports, brothels, taverns and all sorts of criminality.

"It would be hard to get to The Globe without encountering some aspects of what might be described as the seedier side of life," explains Elizabeth Schafer, professor of drama and theatre studies at Royal Holloway. "That would be hard geographically. It's right next to the bear baiting house so it's hard to go to work, even if you're just doing the laundry for The Globe or collecting the laundry, without encountering that sort of thing."

It's believed that Shakespeare arrived in London around 1588, but by then the playhouses of the capital were already a booming trade. At least nine playhouses were built between 1567 and 1622 in London alone, with plenty more popping up in cities like Bath, Bristol, Norwich and York. Before then players (as actors were referred to at the time) were largely made up of travelling troupes who would set up in the yards of inns or be hired to perform in the halls of wealthy patrons.

"The world of professional theatre was really quite new, relatively speaking, in the ▶

EXPERT BIO

Elizabeth Schafer is Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has written extensively on the performance history of Shakespeare's plays and about women directors of Shakespeare's work.

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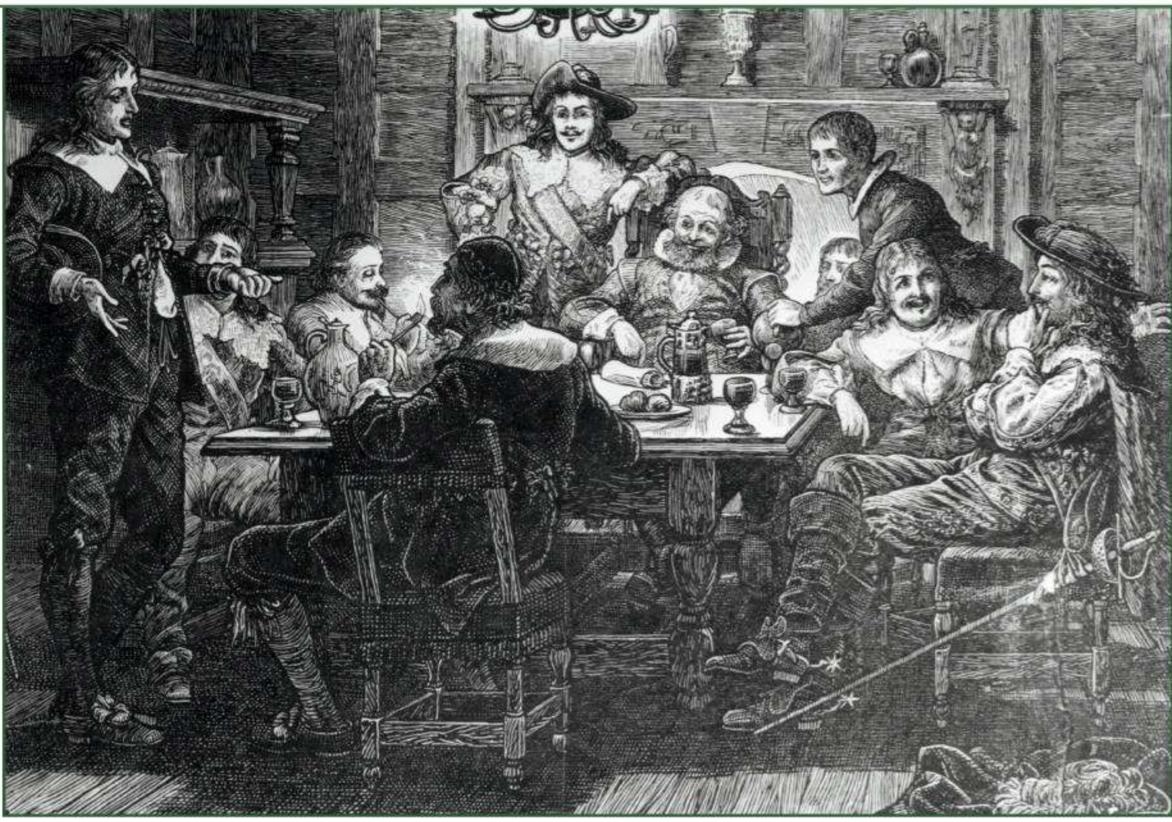


ABOVE Drinking, eating and more frowned-upon pastimes were all tied up with player culture

sense of a theatre that was a permanent place that people went to and paid to see a show," Schafer explains. "Players were considered in the same category as rogues and vagabonds." These travelling bands wandered in and out of towns as strangers, and so they were distrusted. "That's one of the reasons why theatre companies had to have someone in a significant position of power as a patron," says Schafer. Thus we have Leicester's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men, acting troupes who carried the name of a respected man at court.

Even so, respectability was still some way from reaching the theatre, even as it was endorsed and enjoyed by some of the most powerful people in the land.

"It was a very undesirable trade in many ways, and in different ways for different people," explains Schafer. "Hardline puritans opposed the theatre profession because it was inherently deceitful. People were very disturbed by the fact that players could convincingly and plausibly impersonate members of the opposite sex and, even more crucially, members of a class above their own."

Fears around impersonation and social mobility may seem a little overblown to modern sensibilities, but they were taken very seriously in the Elizabethan age. There were even laws in place restricting what people could and couldn't wear for this reason. "This was very much tied with the sumptuary laws," says Schafer. "There were laws, rules and regulations about what people could wear in different class positions, as their costumes said everything. There were laws to punish people who dressed in a costume other than that deemed appropriate to their gender and their status. Of course, the exemption from this were the players, who could perform as the opposite sex or in a different class situation. That was very threatening for some people."

Then there was the more practical health concern in an era where plagues and other diseases were both common and hard to treat. "Now, in this time of pandemic, it just seems very, very easy to understand that. Although it was very exciting when players turned up, potentially it was always dangerous," says Schafer. "The playhouses closed in London when the plague numbers got to a certain number each week." And then there was the general level of disturbance a theatre could cause in a neighbourhood, many venues holding up to 3,000 people at a time. "When a playhouse was operating all kinds of people came and it's like living next to a football ground now," Schafer adds. "It's not something you can ignore."

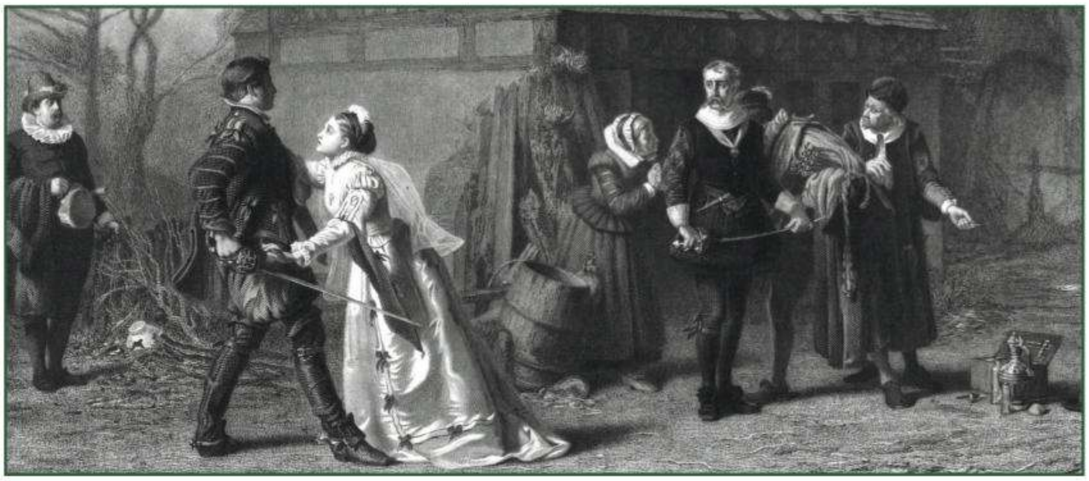
It was under these circumstances that the puritan forces in the City of London banned players from within its walls in 1575, forcing new establishments to find space in the suburbs. It was thanks to this that playhouses emerged in Shoreditch to the northeast of the city centre and across the river in Bankside. As it happens, these areas were also the preferred settlements for new immigrants from abroad and migrant workers from the rest of the kingdom, thereby becoming hotbeds for merchants and new industries looking for workers.

New money in a space outside of the jurisdiction of the City of London led to all sorts of disreputable individuals emerging, from violent criminals to unscrupulous businessmen. A good example of this world is Robert Greene, famous as the first person to make mention of Shakespeare, albeit in a scathing attack on his work in 1592 when he accused him of plagiarism. While a poet and dramatist himself, Greene had abandoned his family and delved deep into the dark life of London, becoming well-acquainted with the brothels, which he wrote about in his work as a pamphleteer. He also took up with a mistress whose brother was a notorious thug who went by the name 'Cutting Ball'.

Inside the playhouse was not necessarily any better. "The playhouse itself was not a particularly respectful environment and certainly the groundlings area [the standing area in front of the stage and the cheapest tickets] would have been quite a challenging space to be in," says Schafer. "Prostitutes knew that they had lots of opportunities there and pickpockets knew that they had lots of opportunities there. Some of the cliches of this crowd of people are true."

In fact, when The Swan theatre was being planned the Lord Mayor of London

BELOW While duelling was common, it was also illegal and sometimes feuds would require both parties to leave the country to participate



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London's Theatres

JUST A FEW OF THE KEY PLAYHOUSES IN THE ELIZABETHAN ERA

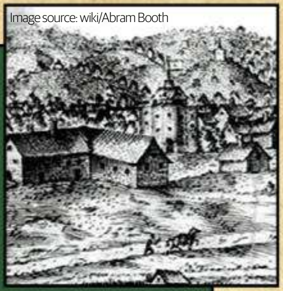


Image source: wiki/Abram Booth

The Curtain

Founded: 1577

When The Theatre was forced to close and move south, The Curtain became the new stage for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, although it had been sitting close by for many years. The Curtain is so named for its location near the curtain wall of St John the Baptist Holywell monastery. Theatres in this time didn't have curtains for their stages as we know them now.

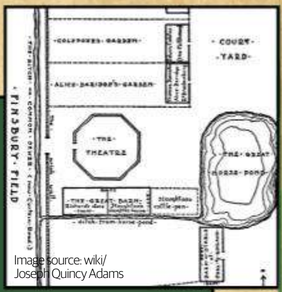

COURT-YARD
THE THEATRE
THE GREAT HORSE-POND
FINSBURY FIELD

Image source: wiki/ Joseph Quincy Adams

The Theatre

Founded: 1576

Sitting just outside of the City walls and therefore outside of its authority, The Theatre was one of the first playhouses to cater to the new theatre crowd. It was built by James Burbage, whose son was a player, and would be the main stage for the Lord Chamberlain's Men from 1594. However, its lease expired in 1597 and it was forced to move.

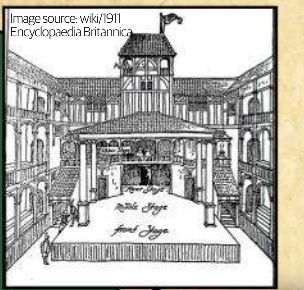
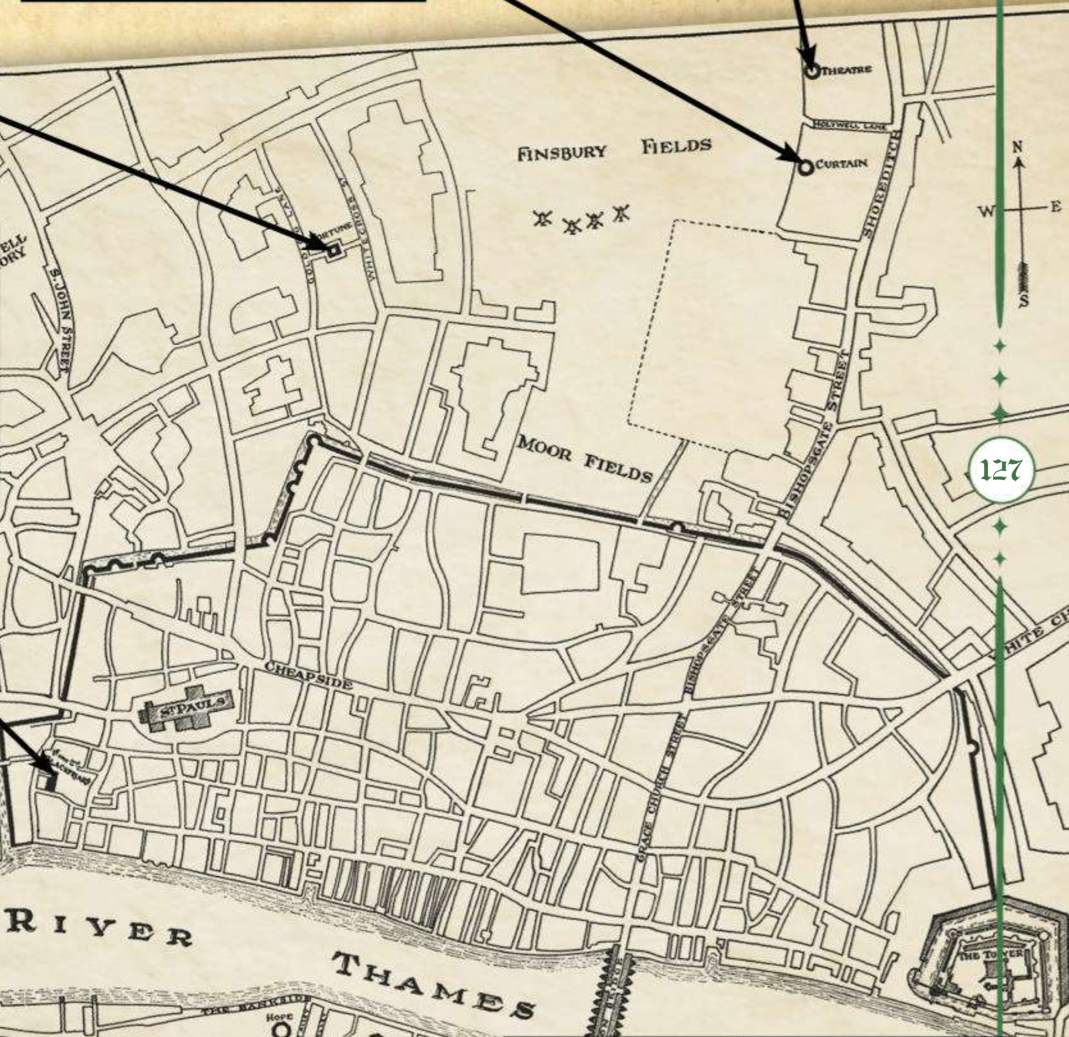

Rear Stage
Middle Stage
front Stage

Image source: wiki/1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica

The Fortune

Founded: 1600

Built by one of the great theatre owners and play providers in London of the era, Philip Henslowe, The Fortune was built as a rival to the legendary Globe theatre. It followed the classic design of three tiers for patrons and a covered stage and became home for The Admiral's Men players.


MAP OF
USES
BLACKFRIARS
BLACKFRIARS
CURTAIN, 1577 ~ after 1627.
FORTUNE, (FIRST) 1600~1621.
FORTUNE, (SECOND) 1623~1661.
GLOBE, (FIRST) 1599~1613.
GLOBE, (SECOND) 1614~1645
HOPE, 1613 ~ after 1682.
PHOENI
RED BUL
ROSE,
SALISBU
SWAN,
THEAT
WHITE
THEATRE
HOLYWELL LANE
FINSBURY FIELDS
CURTAIN
SHOREDITCH
N
W
E
S
RED BULL
FORTUNE
S. JOHN STREET
MOOR FIELDS
BISHOPSGATE STREET
CHEAPSIDE
ST PAULS
FLEET STREET
DRURY LANE
SALISBURY COURT
BLACKFRIARS
GRACE CHURCH STREET
RIVER THAMES
THE TOWER
THE BANKSIDE
HOPE
ROSE
GLOBE
LIBERTY
MAIDEN LANE
CLINK

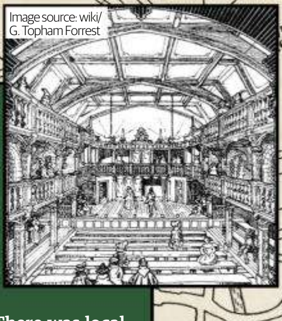


Image source: wiki/ G. Topham Forrest

The Blackfriars

Founded: 1576

Originally set up as an indoor playhouse for the children of Chapel Royal, Blackfriars was bought by James Burbage in 1596. There was local uproar, however, and it was leased to a company of boy players (children's troupes were common and popular) before they disbanded and Burbage's son Richard took over with some fellow players.

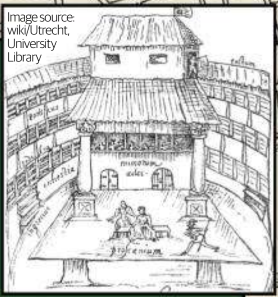


Image source: wiki/Utrecht, University Library

The Swan

Founded: 1595

Built by Francis Langley to take on The Rose, The Swan was the largest playhouse in London at the time. Its time was short-lived, however, as a performance of Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson's The Isle Of Dogs caused enough offence to see Jonson and one of the actors arrested. It staged only a few plays afterwards, instead hosting sword fights and bear baiting.

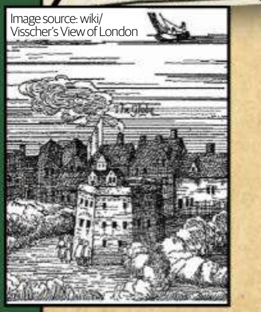
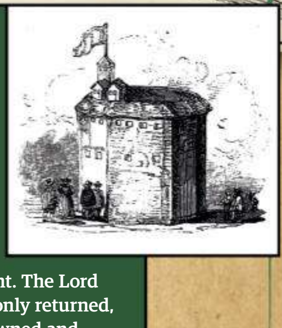


Image source: wiki/ Visscher's View of London

The Rose

Founded: 1587

Another theatre built by Philip Henslowe, this time joining the growing list of establishments that were popping up on Bankside, The Rose was a little smaller than The Globe, holding only 2,000 compared to The Globe's 3,000. It was ultimately demolished in 1606, however, not giving it much time to compete.

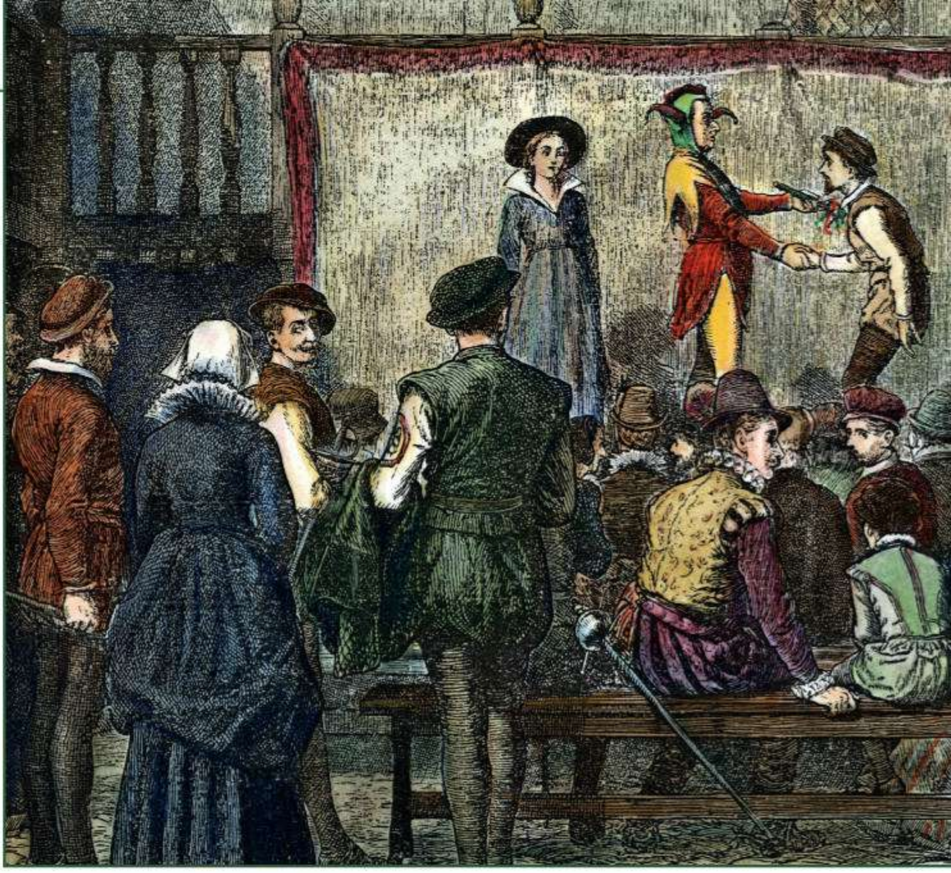


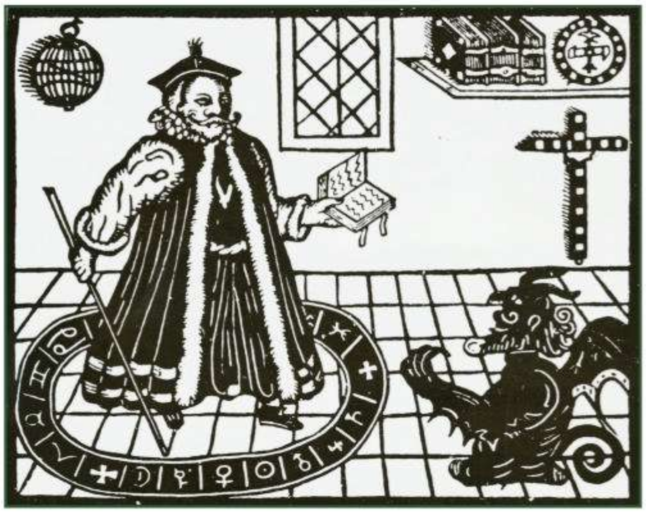
The Globe

Founded: 1599

When The Theatre had to leave Shoreditch it was torn down plank by plank and the timber used to build The Globe on Bankside, which was becoming the new hotspot for entertainment. The Lord Chamberlain's Men not only returned, but some of them also owned and operated the business. Later it became the summer stage for the King's Men.

© Alamy, Getty Images. Map source: wiki/ C. W. Redwood





protested its construction, stating it would attract, "thieves, horse-stealers, whoremongers, cozeners, connycatching persons, practicers of treason, and such other like." However, some of the proprietors of the playhouses, like Philip Henslowe, looked to take advantage of these interests too. With the help of celebrated actor and step-son-in-law Edward Alleyn he not only opened The Rose theatre, but also the brothels that sat around it. In fact, the name The Rose itself may have been paying homage to a seedy hotel in the area.

However, the players and playwrights weren't quite so lucky financially. Unlike today where a play might be performed over and over again, multiple times a day for weeks and perhaps months on end, many plays would be lucky to get more than one showing. Audiences demanded new stories each time they attended and playwrights were churning out plays at an incredible rate. What's more, they only got paid for a play once, with nothing for repeat performances.

"Once they had handed a play to the theatre, it wasn't their property any longer so they couldn't really keep making money in the way that the royalty system operates today," Schafer explains. "One of the best sources on this is Philip Henslowe's accounts of what was on at his theatre. Shakespeare was involved in Philip Henslowe's company some of the time and what he records is an awful lot of loans to impoverished playwrights. Very, very few playwrights came out of this well financially. Players possibly earned a living, but I think it was really quite a ramshackle way of earning money because you were always likely to be closed down because of a riot or the plague. If the playhouse is closed you've got no income."

Still, Shakespeare did end up making some money, but it wasn't because he was both a player and a playwright – it was because he was an investor. "He made his money because he was a shareholder," explains Schafer. "That was where the money was, that's where the respectability is and that's where you've got the basis for going home and buying property in Stratford-upon-Avon and getting a coat of arms, and doing all those bourgeois things that he was wanting to do."

Most playwrights and players lived somewhere in between these two worlds, scraping a living from their work while occasionally being invited into the homes of the rich and powerful to perform. They got to pretend to be wealthy themselves, but rarely enjoyed such luxuries off stage. Many would have turned to crime or other side hustles to get by. One famous example is Christopher Marlowe, who did a bit of espionage on the side.

"Francis Walsingham had set up a very effective spy system through the period, not just under Elizabeth I, but also under James VI and I," says Schafer. "It was a very effective system of observing people, particularly potential Catholics. Marlowe seems to have become a double agent and he's off in France at some stage, and then he behaves erratically." Marlowe's reputation for reckless behaviour and provocative speech has continued to this day. "I wouldn't have wanted to be Christopher Marlowe's handler. I'm not sure that they really

The Impresarios

TWO MEN WHO HELPED TO SHAPE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

Philip Henslowe

c.1540-1543 – 1596

Probably the most important theatre manager in England in this era, Henslowe made his fortune putting on plays and offering entertainment and diversions around them. He started out with money from his marriage to a wealthy widow and opened up The Rose in 1587 in Southwark. Partnering with his step-son-in-law Edward Alleyn (who was an actor), Henslowe went on to open a number of supporting businesses such as bull and bear baiting. They became so successful in this business that the pair were named Masters of the Royal Game of Bears, Bulls and Mastiff Dogs by James I. Back in the theatre world he ran the Admiral's Men and was closely associated with the work of Christopher Marlowe, competing with Shakespeare's plays and his Chamberlain's Men. Henslowe even built The Fortune as a direct competitor to The Globe, only in North London instead of in Bankside. Thanks to his diary, which is really more of a ledger, we have an incredible insight into his business transactions. It also records over 325 plays that he put on between 1592 and 1604, which is one of our best records of the material being performed in London at this time.

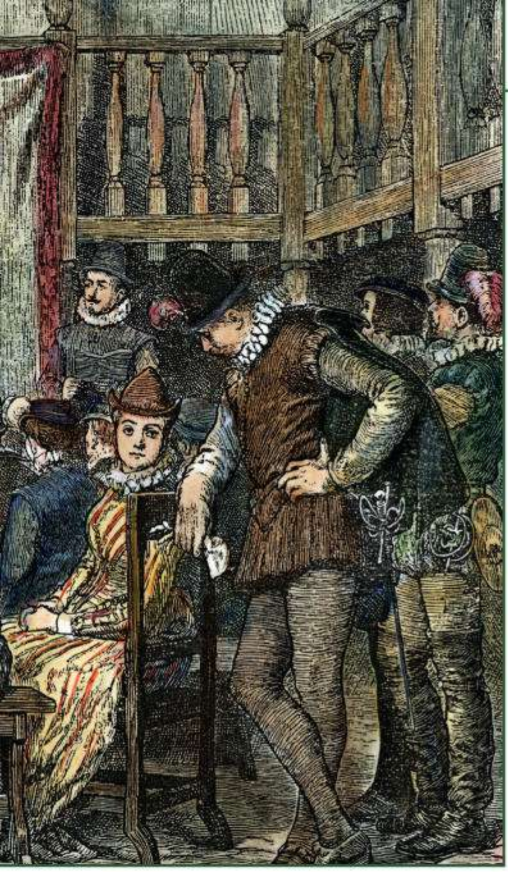
James Burbage

c.1530 – 2 February 1597

Burbage worked his way up in the world of plays and players from the very earliest, simplest time of having performances in the yards of inns for the general public. However, he revolutionised the business when he had The Theatre built in Shoreditch (later to be relocated to Bankside and become The Globe). It was the very first of its kind.

His background was actually in carpentry, although at an unknown age he also took up acting and joined the acting company of Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester. After his work with Dudley, he was the first Englishman to be granted a theatrical licence. It was a bridging moment between the old understanding of acting and the new Elizabethan theatre age.

In building The Theatre, Burbage turned to the classic Roman amphitheatre for inspiration. Such a purpose-built establishment gave actors more room to work as well as space for larger props. Even live cannons might be used in a performance. In the design of the theatre Burbage also sought counsel from Dr John Dee, the famous astronomer, occultist and alchemist, since he had an extensive architectural library to draw upon.



LEFT Before the advent of purpose-built theatres, plays would be put on in the yards of inns or anywhere else crowds might gather

FAR LEFT Marlowe's notable works include *Doctor Faustus*

> *"Shakespeare's company got into a lot of trouble for playing Richard II just before the Earl of Essex's rebellion"*

recruited the ideal person," says Schafer. "I'm sure he was very brilliant, very inventive, probably had excellent ideas, but I don't think he was reliable. I think spies might do better if they were a bit more reliable."

Most of his rebellious spirit was displayed through his work, however, often challenging traditional views on religion in works like *Tamburlaine* and *Doctor Faustus*, but there was outright violence too. He was connected with the killing of an innkeeper named William Bradley after he had argued with him over a bill. Marlowe's friend Thomas Watson stepped in and stabbed Bradley with his sword in the scuffle. Ultimately Marlowe was accused of being an atheist, sold out by another playwiright named Thomas Kyd (possibly under torture or threat of torture), and killed while under investigation in something of a bar brawl in Deptford. The circumstances of that fight, involving three other spies, remain mysterious and while it was said to be over a bill, theories continue around it being an assassination or even Marlowe faking his death to avoid punishment for his alleged crimes.

Perhaps even more dangerous to know was Ben Jonson, another writer and contemporary of Shakespeare and Marlowe who also claimed to have been a mercenary employed to fight against the Spanish in Flanders. "Ben Jonson was a very abrasive character, so he got into trouble where other people probably wouldn't have gotten into trouble," Schafer explains. "He only got away with murder by being branded instead of being executed because he could recite his neck verse." This incident came after Jonson killed a player named Gabriel Spenser in a duel, when duelling was prohibited and punishable by death. Jonson narrowly avoided the noose for his crime by claiming the Benefit of the Clergy, an old law that stated that if a man can recite a passage from the *Bible* he should be considered a priest and handed to the bishop for punishment. He was ultimately branded on his thumb for his crime as a marker to show he could not appeal for clemency in such a way again. That same year, however, his play *Every Man In His Humour* was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's theatrical company, which established his reputation as a playwright.

That being said, murder and manslaughter weren't the only ways a playwright could find themselves on the wrong side of the law - their writing could do that just as easily.

"The plays had to be passed by the Lord Chamberlain, who acted as the approval board for new plays," Schafer explains. "There were a whole load of things that you could not write about and still hope to get approval from the Lord Chamberlain. If you somehow circumvented that you risked prison and you risked being branded. Ben Jonson was also in trouble for his contributions to *Eastward Ho*, which was satirical and was making very rude jokes about people from Scotland when they've only just got a new king from Scotland." Even Shakespeare got in trouble for putting on plays that were deemed to be inflammatory. "Shakespeare's company got into a lot of trouble for playing *Richard II* just before the Earl of Essex's rebellion, because there was this idea, which was probably true, that they were trying to rev people up," Schafer reveals. And perhaps the most popular play of the era was actually an illegal one.

"The biggest play of the entire period was Thomas Middleton's *A Game At Chess*, which you could never stage now because it would be meaningless to anyone," Schafer explains. "It was a great cause celebre and it ran for nine days, at a time when no play ever ran for nine days. It only stopped because the king, who was in Oxford, heard what was happening and sent in the heavies and closed it. That was a play that was totally illegal, had not been passed by the Lord Chamberlain and the censor, and was making fun of the king and the royal family and the royal family of Spain and the Spanish ambassador. So it was very shocking, very political, very illegal and that's why it was popular."

So this was the real world of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, writing and performing alongside bear baiting pits, pushing the boundaries of acceptability, engaging in reckless and often drunken behaviour. They were rascals and vagabonds, but they ultimately left behind a legacy of incredible works, a legacy which represents only a small fraction of the material that they produced in their time.

BELOW Bankside became a massive entertainment area, evidenced by The Theatre being torn down and relocated there as The Globe

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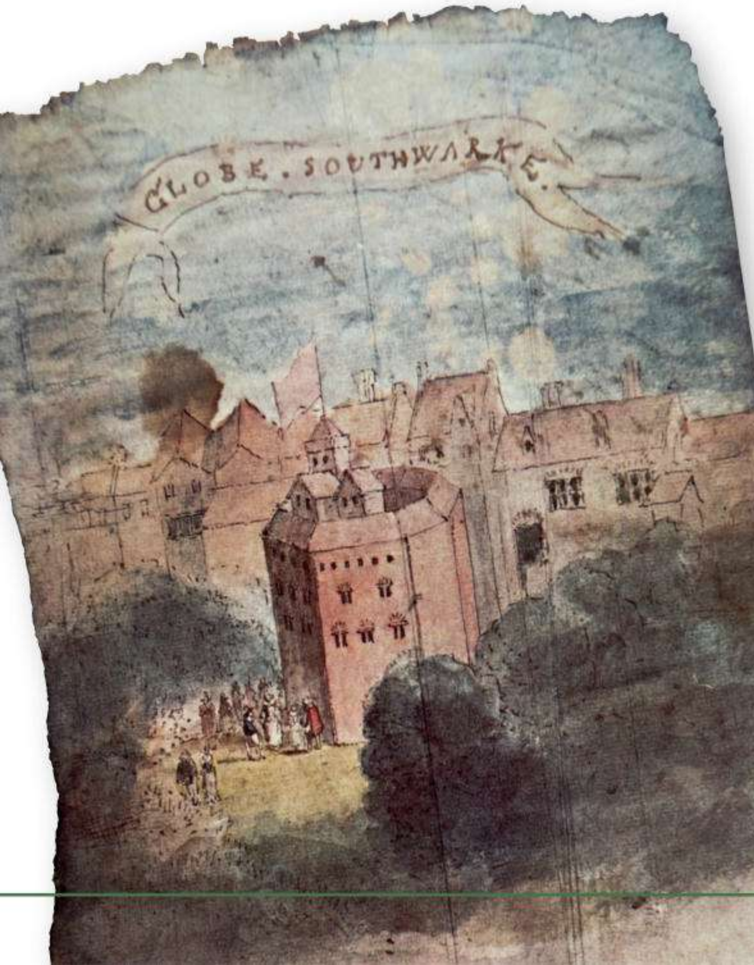
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